

LITERARY ART AND INDIAN WORLD-VIEW
IN
TWENTIETH-CENTURY MEXICAN INDIGENISTA FICTION

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ABSTRACT

After a brief survey of the rise of indigenismo in Spanish America -- a movement fostered by a non-indigenous sector of the population on behalf of the Indian in its midst -- the origins and development of the genre of literary indigenismo are analysed and some general comments are offered on the problems posed by the "outside view" of the non-Indian author and the conjunction of indigenista content and a literary form of expression.

The main body of the thesis examines the novels and short stories which constitute the literary expression of the indigenista movement in Mexico in the present century. Nine early novels (1935-1948) are considered as an indication both of the possibilities for future development and of the main shortcomings found in the genre: an undue ideological thrust, a folkloric emphasis, and a lack of unity. Subsequently, the evolution of indigenista fiction in Mexico is perceived not so much in simple, chronological terms but, rather, as involving three major lines of development, all culminating at much the same time, around 1960.

The mainstream development of the novel is examined in Chapters III and V with Ramón Rubín and Rosario Castellanos respectively. Amongst other advances, Rubín's novels offer a pleasing structural coherence and a psychological focus on the Indian protagonists, though the latter is often marred by authorial intervention. Rosario Castellanos's Balún-canán (1957), a novel in three parts, two of them a non-Indian child's first-person narrative, and,

more especially, her Oficio de tinieblas (1962), a complex novel involving the whole social spectrum — Indian and non-Indian — in the southern Mexican state of Chiapas, bring the indigenista novel proper to its highest point. Oficio de tinieblas is a carefully structured narrative with an interiorizing approach to the Indian characters and it offers an insight into the indigenous world-view both through interiorization and an incorporation of myth.

Alternative directions are pursued in the short story (Chapter II) and in first-person Indian narratives (Chapter IV). Exploration of the short story form contributes to the elimination of most of the early pitfalls while the later short stories offer new developments to be found also in the longer narratives. These include a more personal focus on the Indian, a greater universality, the use of a child protagonist, and the use of a first-person Indian narrator.

Three first-person Indian narratives — more novels than short stories — are examined in Chapter IV, each based on the histoire de vie of an Indian informant. Ricardo Pozas's Juan Pérez Jolote (1948), with a balanced two-part structure, is remarkably objective for a first-person narrative and concentrates heavily on the informative function. A greater subjective focus is brought by Carlo Antonio Castro's "Che Ndu" while the first-person Indian narrative is brought to a climax with Castro's Los hombres verdaderos (1959). A Bildungsroman which incorporates indigenous oral tradition, this novel achieves a genuine insight into the world-view of the Tzeltal Indian protagonist.

The study concludes with an assessment of the achievements of the various novels and short stories examined and aims at placing the indigenista genre in Mexico in the context of the Spanish-

American New Novel, particularly as concerns technical sophistication and the presentation of indigenous myth. Finally, some suggestions are offered as to why the indigenista genre has seemingly run its course.

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INTRODUCTION

MEXICAN INDIGENISMO: A GENERAL PERSPECTIVE

Indigenista literature is only one facet of a wider, partly artistic but to a great extent socio-political movement of indigenismo which developed not only in Mexico but also in other countries of Latin America with a numerous Indian population. Indigenismo, especially in literature, is often more readily associated with the Andean republics than with Mexico for in those countries the Indians form a high proportion of the population. The percentage of the Mexican population that is pure Indian is less: around 12% currently. However, in actual numbers this means about 8 million Indians.¹ It is not surprising, therefore, that, in Mexico too, a recognizable indigenista impetus, both in literature and in other fields, has emerged.

Over the centuries, the Indians in Mexico and in other parts of Latin America have suffered considerable exploitation. Indigenismo has arisen as a reaction against this, in defence of the indigenous peoples. Since it is a movement fostered by

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1. Mexico's Instituto Nacional Indigenista in 1983 spoke in terms of 8 million Indians. See Sara Lovera, "Anuncia el INI una nueva estrategia indigenista", Uno Más Uno, 23 September 1983, p.4. This includes both monolingual Indians, speaking no Spanish, only an indigenous language, and bilingual Indians, who speak Spanish in addition to their native language.

a non-indigenous sector of the population on behalf of the Indian in its midst it is indigenista, not indígena.

Although the term indigenismo was not coined until the twentieth century, the sentiments of the movement date from shortly after the Spanish Conquest, when the indigenous inhabitants of the New World were forced into the position of underdogs. At first, the movement was scarcely more than a humanitarian plea for charity and justice in the face of the kind of treatment of the Indian that gave rise to the Black Legend. Fray Bartolomé de Las Casas (1474-1566), although not the first to express such pleas, is perhaps the figure best known in this respect and is looked upon as the father of indigenismo.

The Indians' condition hardly improved during the Colonial Period; in Mexico, the Independence Movement lost any relevance it originally had to the Indian problem when it was taken over by Iturbide and the criollos; under the progressive liberalism of the ensuing Reforma, equality for the Mexican Indians was merely a theoretical concept as their social and economic position left them open to abuse. This reached overwhelming proportions during the long dictatorship of Porfirio Díaz. Only since the 1910 Revolution has the problem of the Indian in Mexico really been reconsidered, for vindication of the Indian formed part of the process of social awakening initiated by the Mexican Revolution.

Interest in the Indian was also encouraged by the nationalistic impulse of the Revolution and this has complicated the nature of indigenismo in twentieth-century Mexico. The surge of nationalism caused the Mexicans to revalue their country's past, exalting native features and indigenous culture. It is an impulse

which still continues. However, within the search for mexicanidad, as Emilio Uranga points out, regard for the Indian has revealed an ulterior motive: "Toda revolución que se hace a nombre del indio, política o artística, lleva larvada la inconfesada intención de salvar al mestizo".² Furthermore, as Fernando Benítez indicates, the symbolic Indian of the past and his great cultural heritage are of more relevance to national pride than the poverty-stricken, oppressed millions who live today: "Una es nuestra actitud por los indios muertos y otra muy distinta nuestra actitud por los indios vivos. Los muertos suscitan admiraciones, afluencia de turistas, un sólido orgullo nacional; los vivos nos hacen enrojecer de vergüenza, vacían de sentido las palabras de civilización, de progreso, de democracia en las que descansa ese orgullo nacional".³ Cultivation of "lo" indio, as Benítez makes clear, is no solution to the urgent needs of "el" indio.

The nationalistic impulse of the Revolution may have brought the Indian to public notice; it was the social consciousness of the Revolution, however, which became translated into a practical concern for the Indians' condition. This was crystallized by the formation, in 1948, of the Instituto Nacional Indigenista (INI).

Mexico's política indigenista has long been considered by the rest of Latin America as one of the most advanced. It is of particular note that it was claimed as exemplary in its ideal of

2. "Ensayo de una ontología del mexicano", Cuadernos Americanos, Year VIII, 44, no.2 (March-April 1949), 135-48 (p.147).

3. Tierra incógnita (Mexico: Era, 1972), p.43.

national integration. For the attention which indigenismo in the practical field has nurtured for the Indians and the improvement it strives for in their conditions have not been its only aims. The aspiration was to effect an aculturación dirigida as a means for the achievement of the ultimate goal of national integration.

Before attaining this final political objective, the prime concerns of practical indigenismo are social and economic. This sphere of indigenismo is a development of the humanitarian pleas of centuries past. Integrationist policies, on the other hand, stem from the nationalistic impulse of the Revolution, from the rise of the mestizo and the assumption of the Indian heritage as a national banner to be exalted.

Since the 1960s, Mexico's national política indigenista, as upheld by the Instituto Nacional Indigenista, has been severely criticized, for the redemption of the Indian as a prior step to national integration is by no means disinterested. Integration has meant integration into the lowest ranks of the capitalist class-state; it has meant further exploitation while also depriving the Indians of their cultural identity. A leading anthropologist and the author of a novela indigenista, Ricardo Pozas, puts over the point forcibly: "La burguesía en el poder ya ni siquiera disimula con ideales nacionalistas neoliberales, el verdadero contenido de su indigenismo, el cual ha llegado a convertirse en un medio expeditivo para la explotación de los conglomerados humanos más fácilmente explotables". In fact, Pozas holds that indigenismo as upheld by the government is no longer connected to the original ideals of the Mexican Revolution.⁴

4. Ricardo Pozas and Isabel H. de Pozas, Los indios en las clases sociales de México, 5th edition (Mexico: Siglo XXI, 1976), pp.98-100.

After years of receiving criticism and attack, the Instituto Nacional Indigenista eventually assumed a self-critical stance and declared itself in favour of a final renunciation of the policy of integration, promising instead ethnic and cultural pluralism as the basis of the country's development. One of the more recent gestures in this direction (December 1982) has been INI's establishing of six radio transmitters to broadcast in indigenous languages, the aim being to "entregar la palabra al indio" while maintaining respect for the culture of the ethnic group served by each transmitter.⁵ Nonetheless, the late 1970s and especially the 1980s have also brought severe repression to the Indian population and to the peasants in general, as can be judged from various articles in the Mexican weekly, Proceso.⁶ Such contradictions in Mexico's Indian policy substantiate criticism expressed about the nueva política indigenista of the late 1970s. In a pamphlet which explains and examines that policy, the author, recognizing that the integration policy rested on the economic urge to suppress one form of social existence to make way for another, pointed out the weakness in the new policy, asking, "en qué medida es posible renunciar al coloniaje cultural y al intento de implantar una cultura sobre otra (que ha de disolverse o sublimarse) si no se renuncia al mismo tiempo

5. Florence Toussaint, "La voz de los indígenas", Proceso, 20 December 1982, pp.57-58.

6. See, inter alia, Enrique Maza, "El neolatifundismo, instrumento gubernamental para proteger al sistema", 11 January 1982, pp.7-9; Guillermo Correa, "Despojos y represión: la historia de 500,000 indígenas en las Huastecas", 28 June 1982, pp.24-26; and the anonymous "La agresión directa a los campesinos se hace método, en el afán de impulsar a empresarios", 30 August 1982, pp.16-17.

a la voluntad de implantar un régimen productivo sobre otro, para barrerlo de la historia".⁷

Indigenista politics may prove unable to produce a satisfactory solution but the Indians themselves show the will to fight against being swept away. They are no longer the pawns of alien indigenista policies. In 1975 El Consejo Nacional de Pueblos Indígenas was formed, in which the indigenous peoples of Mexico, representing 72 ethnic groups and 56 indigenous languages, strongly assert their cultural identity and oppose the disintegration of their communities. They also propose unity with the peasants and workers — which may cast suspicion on the motives behind INI's recent renunciation of integrationist policies — for only by joining forces amongst themselves and with the other oppressed sectors of society do they believe they can achieve democracy.⁸ The continuation of this self-assertive spirit can be seen in the march of some 2,000 Indians of all ages from Chiapas, first to the provincial capital and then to Mexico City to make their demands.⁹ In view of this, it is perhaps hardly surprising that INI's latest nueva estrategia (1983) is one of self-determination for the Indians, based on "la liberación del indio por él mismo".¹⁰

7. Gustavo Esteva, "Viabilidad de una nueva política indigenista", Suplemento: México Indígena, 1, no.1 (May 1978), 1-8 (p.5).

8. Carmen Lira, "Por su autodeterminación, los indígenas de las 72 etnias", Uno Más Uno, 27 November 1978, pp.1 & 5.

9. Amongst the many articles documenting this from day to day is Juan Balboa, "La columna indígena cumplió diez días de marcha", Uno Más Uno, 5 October 1983, p.4.

10. Lovera, p.4.

LITERARY INDIGENISMO

While the underlying aim of twentieth-century indigenismo in the political sense in Mexico seems to have been national integration and the eventual absorption of the Indian into the mainstream of national culture, this was not the aim of most literary indigenismo of the time. The writers of indigenista literature from the 1930s to the 1960s were performing an informative function, revealing to their readers the Indian reality: a reality which involved the exploitation of the Indian, the rift between Indian and non-Indian and an exposition of the Indians' cultural idiosyncrasy. On the whole, these writers were interested in the indigenous peoples per se, in depicting their situation and outlook. In their critical attitude to the relationship between Indian and "white" and in their genuine interest in the Indians for what they are in all their diversity, many indigenista authors have perhaps been in advance of the national political attitude. Furthermore, they have been genuinely indigenista — pro-Indian — as the defenders of the Indian in the Colonial Period were and as today's anthropologists are, having championed what the Indians themselves are now standing up for rather than aiding the Indian as a means to an end that would eventually be destructive to the autochthonous cultures.

What we class as indigenista literature in Mexico is a twentieth-century phenomenon, spanning from the mid-30s to the early 60s, from El indio (1935), by Gregorio López y Fuentes, Mexico's first indigenista novel, to Oficio de tinieblas (1962), the last novel of Rosario Castellanos. The presence of the Indian

in the writings of this part of the world, however, dates back to the histories and chronicles of the Conquest and the Colonial Period. Of especial interest with regard to indigenista fiction are the writings of the missionary friars who were striving to achieve some understanding of the New World's native peoples and accumulated a wealth of detailed information about the Indians' traditional customs, beliefs, and world-view.

None of this, however, was what we might call creative literature. Due to Colonial pressures, the novel as a genre was not born in Mexico until after the Independence Movement. In its treatment of the Indian, the nineteenth-century novel in Mexico, as in the rest of Latin America, was typified by a Romantic approach which presented the Indian as a bon sauvage. A sentence from Jicoténcal (1826) — the first Latin American novel about the Indian, set in Mexico but of greatly disputed authorship — suffices to expose such Romantic affiliations: "La americana manifestó unos sentimientos tan puros y tan decididos sobre la práctica de esta virtud [la hospitalidad] como eran de esperarse de un alma sencilla, no corrompida por las artes de la civilización".¹¹

The Romantic approach to the Indian in the nineteenth-century Latin-American novel was derived from its imitation of earlier European authors like Rousseau, Chateaubriand, and Marmontel. Ironically, the idealization of primitive man so evident in the European Romantic sensibility and taken up by the

11. Jicoténcal (Philadelphia, 1826), p.46. A copy of this anonymous novel is available in the British Library.

Latin American authors of last century had, in fact, been inspired by the indigenous peoples of the latter's own continent. The concept of the noble savage was born in literature with Ercilla's sixteenth-century epic poem, La Araucana. Indeed, long before Rousseau, Fray Bartolomé de Las Casas, in addition to establishing the cry for social justice for the Indian, had looked on the indigenous inhabitants of the New World as a noble and pacific people.

The nineteenth-century portrayal of the Indian in Spanish-American literature, typified by its idealization and sentimentalization of the Indian, who is seen as an exotic figure, has tended to be referred to by critics as indianismo. Such indianista literature has been contrasted, especially in South America, with twentieth-century indigenista literature. A clear definition was proposed by Aída Cometta Manzoni:

La primera [indianista] se ocupa del indio en forma superficial, sin compenetrarse de su problema, sin estudiar su psicología, sin confundirse en su idiosincrasia. La literatura indigenista, en cambio, trata de llegar a la realidad del indio y ponerse en contacto con él. Habla de sus luchas, de su miseria, de su dolor; expone su situación angustiosa; defiende sus derechos; clama por su redención.¹²

Luis Alberto Sánchez reasserted this distinction, holding that "La novela de 'mera emoción exotista' será la que llamemos 'indianismo' y la de 'un sentimiento de reivindicación social', 'indigenismo'",¹³ the former being largely a tradition of the nineteenth century, the latter of the twentieth.

12. El indio en la poesía de América española (Buenos Aires: Torres, 1939), p.20.

13. Proceso y contenido de la novela hispanoamericana (Madrid, 1953), p.545.

It would seem from a fairly recent article (1972) by Urrello that this distinction became widely accepted.¹⁴ However, more recently still, the Peruvian critic Cornejo Polar has suggested the use of indigenismo in literature as more of a blanket term.¹⁵ This has the advantage of catering for a more all-embracing perspective. Indianismo, which he renames indigenismo romántico, for example, emerges as a subsection or stage, not so rigidly cut off from the other manifestations of the current as by the previous terminology.

Although Cornejo Polar was taking indigenismo literario in the Peruvian context, we shall adopt his usage as more appropriate to the Mexican experience, for in Mexico there is not the simple differentiation between nineteenth-century Romantic indianismo and socially committed indigenismo of the twentieth century that most critics have perceived as the pattern in the Andean republics, the area with which literatura indigenista tends to be associated. The kind of reivindicación social that many of these countries were voicing in their early twentieth-century literary indigenismo emerged in Mexico in the Novel of the Revolution. Indeed, Cometta Manzoni notes the aptness of this phenomenon: "En México, la literatura indigenista se confunde con la que surge a raíz de la revolución. Y así debía ser, puesto que la revolución mexicana se hizo para 'los de abajo' y en México, los que están allí, son los indios".¹⁶

14. A. Urrello, "El nuevo indigenismo peruano", Cuadernos Americanos, Year XXXI, no.6 (November-December 1972) 167-88 (p.168).

15. Antonio Cornejo Polar, La novela indigenista (Lima: Lasontay, 1980), pp.36-37.

16. Aída Cometta Manzoni, El indio en la novela de América (Buenos Aires: Futuro, 1960), p.13.

Referring to the same phenomenon, L.A. Sánchez, who holds that the indigenista novel is rich and active where the Indian problem is one of real conflict, asserts that "México, por ejemplo, es menos insistente en el asunto, tal vez por haberlo abordado con las armas durante la Revolución" (p.550). This comment, while it clearly fails to comprehend the contemporary Indian situation in Mexico, suffers from a misconception about Mexico's literatura indigenista which — no doubt through analogy with the Andean tradition — equates it too readily with a literature of social protest.

In Mexico, as well as involving social protest, twentieth-century literary indigenismo has manifested, as John Brushwood points out, a strong element of cultural analysis.¹⁷ While in the 30s and 40s this cultural emphasis may have been little more than costumbrismo, the late 40s, 50s, and early 60s brought the contributions of anthropological study (giving rise to what has been termed "la novela de recreación antropológica") and also a deeper appreciation of the indigenous cosmovisión. (Analogous developments in Peru, for example, with José María Arguedas, had to be termed neoindigenismo or nuevo indigenismo in order to distinguish them from the more propagandistic connotations there of plain indigenismo.)

The literatura indigenista from the later 40s to the early 60s in Mexico is clearly of significant stature for Joseph Sommers recognizes within it a whole cycle and a new literary current,

17. Mexico in its Novel: A Nation's Search for Identity (Austin & London, 1966), p.24.

including both novels and short stories.¹⁸ Marta Portal, too, sees "un nuevo brote indigenista" beginning with Juan Pérez Jolote (1948), by Ricardo Pozas, and coming to a peak in 1962 with Oficio de tinieblas, by Rosario Castellanos.¹⁹ With this novel the indigenista genre in Mexico is recognized as reaching maturity, for D.L. Schmidt asserts that Oficio de tinieblas "takes its place beside the best of contemporary Mexican fiction".²⁰ Some of the books, these two included, have been published in translation, which is a further indication of their success.

Before reaching the success of the later exponents, however, literary indigenismo in Mexico had many stumbling blocks to overcome. Some of the problems derived from the heritage of the nineteenth century; some clearly related to the links of the genre with the Novel of the Revolution; others can be ascribed to the nationalistic impulse of the Revolution. The majority, however, were due simply to the indigenista nature of the content — about Indians but written by non-Indians — and to the fact that this was presented as literature, leading us to expect a certain artistic value.

As regards the heritage of the nineteenth century, particularly of note is the idealization of the Indian, ranging from glorification of Man in the natural state to idyllic

18. "El ciclo de Chiapas: nueva corriente literaria", Cuadernos Americanos, Year XXIII, 133, no.2 (March-April 1964), 246-61.

19. "Narrativa indigenista mexicana de mediados de siglo", Cuadernos Hispanoamericanos, 298 (April 1975), 196-207 (pp.196-97).

20. "Changing Narrative Techniques in the Mexican indigenista Novel" (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Kansas, 1972), Abstract: DA 2952-A.

picturesqueness. The strong ideological slant of many of the nineteenth-century novels is another feature which comes through into the present century, though not only in indigenista literature: it is typical of the Novel of the Revolution too.

Turning to the latter, several of the shortcomings we associate with the early indigenista novel relate clearly to its links with the Novel of the Revolution. The ideological factor is a case in point, for the novels of the Revolution tended to be thesis novels. An aspect of the ideological concern was, of course, social protest — the key factor critics have pointed to in the Andean indigenista novel earlier this century — which often came over as crude social realism. Furthermore, ideological preoccupations, social protest included, tend to lead to a lack of concern with the novel as art: a problem which is particularly apparent in Mexico's early indigenista novels this century. Partly as a result of its didactic leanings and partly due to its concern with local features, the Novel of the Revolution is not strong on individual character creation but tends to rely on stereotypes, mouthpiece characters, and representative groups. This can be seen in the early indigenista novel too.

Indigenista literature in Mexico of the 1930s and 1940s occasionally became confused with the search for Mexican identity and the kind of interest in the Indian which was motivated by concern with the mestizo. López y Fuentes in Los peregrinos inmóviles (1944) and Menéndez in Nayar (1941) are interested in the mestizo as well as in the Indian.

A further complication deriving from the nationalistic impulse of the Revolution lies in a group of literary creations

about the Mexican Indian, inspired by "lo" indio and the Indian cultural heritage. These "formas de romántica reconstrucción de épocas pasadas" have on occasion been included in indigenismo literario,²¹ but have also been compiled under the title: Literatura indígena moderna where the editor's introduction describes them as "recreaciones modernas de antigüedades indígenas realizadas por hombres que guardan aún un sentimiento y un acervo de tradiciones autóctonas, pero cuyos medios de expresión literaria son occidentales".²² Not really a part of the indigenista tradition, these works are scarcely "indígenas" either, as they have been written by non-Indians. "Neoindígena" might have been a more apt description of such literature.

Moving on from features of indigenismo romántico and more especially these features of the Novel of the Revolution and the Revolutionary impulse which affect the nature of Mexican indigenista literature, we come to the shortcomings that derive from the simple fact that we are dealing with material which is both indigenista and classified as literature.

Disregarding the critical trend, largely pertaining to South America, which identifies literary indigenismo with literature of protesta social, the principal characteristic of

21. Gustavo Correa, "El nacionalismo cultural en la literatura hispanoamericana", Cuadernos Americanos, Year XVII, no.2 (March-April 1958), 225-36 (p.232).

22. Literatura indígena moderna, edited by José Luis Martínez (Mexico: Mensaje, 1942), p.14. Included in this collection are: Antonio Mediz Bolio, La tierra del faisán y del venado (1922); Ermilo Abreu Gómez, Canek (1940); Andrés Henestrosa, Los hombres que dispersó la danza (1929). Of similar type is Abreu Gómez's Quetzalcoatl: sueño y vigilia (1947) and his Héroes Mayas (1942), which includes Canek.

indigenista works is that they are concerned with the indígena. There is clearly a fundamental difficulty here relating to the indigenista nature of the works concerned for, although they deal with Indians and attempt to inform the non-Indian reader about these Indians, they are written by non-Indians. As Cornejo Polar points out, indigenista literature, in this respect, constitutes a classic example of heterogeneous literature.²³ The author is alien to his subject matter and writes for consumption by more outsiders.

This being the case, how then can the author offer us a genuine depiction of the Indian and an inside view? Cornejo Polar insists that he cannot, asserting that "la perspectiva exterior es la condición de existencia de la novela indigenista".²⁴ The problem is not a newly-discovered one but was pin-pointed by Mariátegui in Peru as early as 1928, seven years before the emergence of Mexico's first indigenista novel: "La literatura indigenista no puede darnos una visión rigurosamente verista del indio. Tiene que idealizarlo y estilizarlo. Tampoco puede darnos su propia ánima. Es todavía una literatura de mestizos. Por eso se llama indigenista y no indígena".²⁵

The problem of the outside view faces the indigenista writer at all stages for he, his reading public, the Spanish language he expresses himself in, and even the form of literary

23. La novela indigenista, pp.60 & 63.

24. Antonio Cornejo Polar, "La literatura indigenista: un género contradictorio", Texto Crítico, 14 (1979), 58-70 (p.62).

25. José Carlos Mariátegui, Siete ensayos de interpretación de la realidad peruana (Lima:Amauta, 1963), p.292.

expression he usually employs — the novel — are all alien to the indigenous subject matter. Nevertheless, there is certainly scope for coming closer to an inside view of the Indian. The evolution of the indigenista current reveals a considerable lessening of the gap, usually achieved by some of the following approaches.

Rather than concentrate exclusively on especially Indian features, the author can aim for a more universal appeal. This could be achieved thematically or through an insight into the psyche of the individual. By portraying Indian figures simply as human beings, with thoughts, fears, and aspirations relating to their human condition, the author can make them characters comprehensible to the non-Indian on an individual and universal level. Furthermore, the development of psychological depths and character creation are not only of significance in achieving a convincing portrayal of Indian figures; they are also trends which bring the indigenista genre more into line with recent literary developments in the mainstream Latin-American novel.

However, there must be a balance between this and the Indian content if the works are to remain indigenista. We must be convinced that we are reading about Indians in order for the author to fulfil his prime motivation in writing these works: to reveal the Indian to the rest of the world.

Many of the Mexican indigenistas in the 1930s and 1940s had turned to costumbrismo in an attempt to express the Indians' distinctive cultural identity but this only produced a picturesque outside view of the Indian as an interesting but exotic figure. With the development of anthropological studies, the

Indians' customs and outlook were probed more deeply and analytically and this had positive repercussions in indigenista literature. Once a certain universality and psychological penetration both at individual and group level is added, the possibility emerges of capturing the indigenous world-view, especially in its magico-religious manifestations, and putting it over in a form the reader can relate to.

In conjunction with the problem of the outside view posed by the indigenista nature of the current, there are complications presented by the fact that this is "literature" and so we expect a certain level of literary art.

Peter Gold, referring to indigenista novels in the Andean republics, suggests that, since literatura indigenista is essentially "a functional literature of social protest", perhaps it requires "a different set of criteria from that used for non-functional 'aesthetic' literature".²⁶ We would not accept this stance, for it brushes aside the possibility that the "message" of a piece of literature may be enhanced by "aesthetic" considerations — structure, language, etc. — and that, conversely, a "literary" shortcoming may be detrimental to the propaganda. Besides, Mexico's indigenista literature, as we have already stated, involves a considerable element of cultural analysis. It is not characterized only by social protest, though it is committed in the more general sense that it aspires to explain or expose the Indian situation in some way. This kind of

26. "The Literature of the 'indigenista' Movement in the Andean Republics since 1899" (unpublished B.Litt. thesis, University of Oxford, 1970), p.6 of Abstract.

commitment, however, need not necessarily exclude the artistic nature of literary creation. As Ernesto Sábato observes: "Creo que toda literatura ha sido siempre una literatura al servicio de algo Todos sabemos que toda gran literatura tiene de servir a la causa del hombre".²⁷

The suggestion of a different set of criteria for literature of social protest, although perhaps a dangerous stance to adopt, is, however, indicative of a much more all-embracing characteristic of the indigenista novel, especially in its early stages. The indigenista novel, in these early stages, is a branch of regionalist literature and the regionalist novel, as Juan Loveluck has pointed out, is a novela impura.²⁸

It is the non-novelistic "impurities" — elements of propaganda, folklore, etc. — which are in the main responsible for accusations made against the indigenista novel of bad structure and lack of unity. Regarding such inclusions, however, what we must realise is that, while they may be impurities as concerns the Western concept of the Novel, as regards indigenista literature many of them represent the very raison d'être of the current: the author's attempt to capture for the reader the Indian world and the Indian situation. The impurities are, therefore, part and parcel of the indigenista nature of the current.

27. "Debates de Sur: Literatura gratuita y literatura comprometida", Sur, 138 (April 1946), 105-21 (p.119).

28. "Crisis y renovación de la novela hispanoamericana", in La novela hispanoamericana, edited by Juan Loveluck, 3rd edition (Santiago de Chile, 1969), p.17. The article is also in Coloquio sobre la novela hispanoamericana, edited by Ivan S. Schulman (Mexico, 1967).

We are thus in the awkward position, especially with the early novels, of assessing a current whose very existence may be a contradiction in terms: both novela and indigenista. In addition to the fundamental problem of the "outside view", therefore, the optimum balance between literary art and indigenista emphasis will also form a focal point in our examination of Mexico's literatura indigenista.

We shall begin in Chapter I with the early novels of the 1930s and 1940s, still clearly part of the regionalist tradition. The mainstream development of the indigenista novel will be pursued subsequently in Chapter III, with the novels of Ramón Rubín, and in Chapter V, with the novels of Rosario Castellanos. The intervening chapters will explore alternative fruitful options to the mainstream novel: the cuento in Chapter II and first-person Indian narratives (still with a non-Indian author) in Chapter IV.

CHAPTER I

PITFALLS AND POSSIBILITIES

THE INDIGENISTA NOVEL FROM THE 1930s INTO THE 1940s

There are nine novels in the period from 1935 to 1948 which, while they offer insight into possibilities developed in later examples of the genre, also make evident many of the less satisfactory features of Mexico's twentieth-century indigenista novel in its early stages:

El indio (1935), by Gregorio López y Fuentes

El resplandor (1937), by Mauricio Magdaleno

La rebelión de los colgados (Berlin, 1936; Mexico, 1938)

by B. Traven

Nayar (1941), by Miguel Ángel Menéndez

Los peregrinos inmóviles (1944), by Gregorio López y Fuentes

Guelaguetza (1947), by Rogelio Barriga Rivas

Donde crecen los tepozanes (1947), by Miguel N. Lira

Lola Casanova (1947), by Francisco Rojas González

Cajeme (1948), by Armando Chávez Camacho

(A few later, anachronistic novels like Rogelio Barriga Rivas's La mayordomía (1952), Antonio Rodríguez's La nube estéril (1952), and Rosa de Castaño's Fruto de sangre (1958) contain much the same pitfalls as the early novels. As such novels make no further contribution to the development of Mexico's indigenista fiction, they will be omitted from our study.)

PITFALLS

A preliminary examination of the pitfalls encountered in the early indigenista novels is worth undertaking for, not only does it highlight subsequent achievements, it also reveals the confused origins of the genre and the fact that the novelists concerned were torn between different and seemingly incompatible objectives.

The principal failings of these early novels lie in their ideological thrust, folkloric emphasis, and lack of unity. The former two features are the non-novelistic impurities which lead to the last problem: lack of unity. While such impurities are, as we noted in the Introduction, part and parcel of the indigenista nature of these works, it is necessary to achieve some balance between the indigenista preoccupations and the literary form used to express them. On the whole, the early indigenista novelists are prone to sacrificing the literary art of the novel to their predominantly ideological and folkloric indigenista concerns.

In addition to these three major pitfalls, there is also a different kind of impurity: the problem of indigenista concerns — themselves to a great extent provoked by the impulse of the Mexican Revolution — becoming confused with other preoccupations which arose from the Revolution: in particular, focus on the mestizo and a concern for those at the bottom of the social scale: the peasant and the peon. This inevitably had an effect on the indigenista issue.

Rather than examine each novel individually, we shall approach them as a group, assessing first of all the major problem areas and subsequently any possibilities for future development. We shall examine first the case of the, perhaps borderline, indigenista novels whose focus on the Indian is confused with the other concerns mentioned above.

Confusion with other Revolutionary concerns: the mestizo

An overlap of ideological impulses has impaired the impact of a couple of novels which have been classified as indigenista: López y Fuentes's Los peregrinos inmóviles¹ and Menéndez's Nayar.²

The last two-thirds of Nayar deals with the Cora Indians of the Nayarit region, thus partially justifying the novel's inclusion in the category of indigenista fiction. However, the work is also concerned with the mestizo's quest for identity. The search for a new life undertaken by Ramón, the mestizo, and the narrator takes them through a kind of historical allegory in reverse order, from the Revolution to the Conquest and Discovery. The Coras are introduced in order to highlight the importance of the mestizo's Indian heritage, the heart of this quest taking place amongst them.

Rodríguez Chicharro, regarding this novel a priori as indigenista, maintains that its fundamental defect lies in its not being integrally indigenista.³ Conversely, of course, we could assert that the Indian-oriented section itself does not contribute sufficiently to the hero's quest to justify its monopoly of a good half of the text. The failing of Nayar lies

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1. Gregorio López y Fuentes, Los peregrinos inmóviles (Mexico: Botas, 1944). All subsequent references are to this edition.
 2. Miguel Ángel Menéndez, Nayar (Mexico: Zamná, 1941). All subsequent references are to this edition.
 3. César Rodríguez Chicharro, "La novela indigenista mexicana" (unpublished Master's thesis, Mexico: UNAM, Filosofía y Letras, 1959), p.139.

in the unresolved tension between the two differing concerns. The author is eager to make his novel a study of the culturally hybrid mestizo but is drawn by the fascination of the Cora Indians to devote much of the text to indigenista matters.

In fact, the two concerns clash. Ramón does not emerge as the "péndulo oscilando entre dos razas" (p.189), tending to the Indian side, that the author would like him to be. The narrator may point out Ramón's proximity to the Indian in colour at the start: "levadura mestiza en que aparentemente predomina el indio" (p.9) and may make assertions like the following (referring to the revered old Cora man, Tatoani Leandro) that place Ramón closer than himself, a white, to the Indian: "Con Ramón tenía más deferencias que conmigo porque les aproximaba el color de la piel" (p.143). However, none of this is borne out by action. Rather, it is the narrator, through his poetic turns of phrase and his first-person account of Indian matters, who enjoys any such rapport with the Indian. Ramón's affinity with the Indian, in contrast, is only skin deep.

We find, therefore, that Menéndez's desire to capture the nature of the mestizo is at odds with his patent interest in the Cora Indians. The resulting novel falls short of our expectations. It satisfies neither urge completely and suffers from a consequent lack of unity.

López y Fuentes's semi-allegorical novel, Los peregrinos inmóviles, is similarly concerned with the mestizo, leading Alegría to describe it as follows: "Una vasta alegoría en que se expresa el nacimiento del pueblo mexicano, sus raíces en la mentalidad primitiva del indio, y el proceso de su historia

hasta convertirse en una nación independiente".⁴ There is much less desire in this novel on the author's part, however, to study the Indian per se for López y Fuentes does not even specify to which tribe his Indians -- the subject of the second of the three parts -- belong. Apparently Mexicas (Aztecs) and exemplifying the divisions and peregrinations of the Indian tribes in Mexico, their function is symbolic, as with the Indians of El indio. Because of this and an accompanying lack of profound characterization, they provide us with little insight into the indigenous world-view. Overall, the focus of Los peregrinos inmóviles is more on the Mexican mestizo than on the Indian, a point made clear by an earlier title: Nosotros los mestizos. Nonetheless, with its Indian-oriented Part II, there still exists the unresolved tension between two distinct concerns -- the mestizo and the Indian -- which proved unsatisfactory in Nayar.

Confusion with other Revolutionary concerns: the underdog

It is again a confusion of interests that brings us to criticize Mauricio Magdaleno's El resplandor⁵ and B. Traven's La rebelión de los colgados⁶ in relation to indigenismo. As Cowie notes, though he does not pursue the implications of the

4. Fernando Alegría, Breve historia de la novela hispano-americana (Mexico, 1959), pp.168-69.

5. Mauricio Magdaleno, El resplandor (Mexico: Botas, 1937). All subsequent references are to this edition.

6. B. Traven, La rebelión de los colgados, 14th edition (Mexico: Cía.General de Ediciones, 1977). All subsequent references are to this edition.

situation, "Traven pinta a los indios como un proletariado oprimido".⁷ From the three initial chapters of La rebelión de los colgados — about a Tzotzil Indian, Cándido, and his family — it is clear that Traven cares nothing for the Indian idiosyncrasy, for even such a culturally revealing event as Cándido's wife's burial is only of significance to the author in what it reveals of the financial exploitation of Cándido. The rest of the novel deals with the oppressed in general, irrespective of whether they are Indians. Cándido, who at the beginning seemed to be our protagonist, is seldom mentioned in the central part of the novel and by the rebellion at the end, which merges with the mainstream Revolution, he has been completely forgotten by Traven.

Another novel by Traven, La carreta (Berlin, 1930; Mexico, 1949), promises, likewise, from its opening sentence, to be an indigenista novel: "Andrés Ugaldo era indio de pura raza y miembro de la gran tribu Tzeltal",⁸ but it, too, gives way to Traven's abundant propaganda with little concern for Andrés himself. Thus we see that Traven's Indians are only nominally so, their real function being to serve the author's propaganda.

In Traven's case, social protest and other propagandistic concerns seem to exclude a preoccupation with the novel as literary art. This is not so in the case of Mauricio Magdaleno's El resplandor, though the latter has in common with La rebelión de los colgados a concern with the Indian simply as underdog, not

7. Lancelot Cowie, El indio en la narrativa contemporánea de México y Guatemala (Mexico: INI, 1976), p.34.

8. B. Traven, La carreta, 10th edition (Mexico: Cía. General de Ediciones, 1977), p.7.

as particularly Indian.

While El resplandor makes it clear that it deals with the Otomí Indians of the Mezquital region, it does not make any attempt to penetrate the Otomí idiosyncrasy and seldom individualizes the Indians. (The major exception to this, Bonifacio, is, significantly, largely assimilated into the mestizo world.) These Otomíes are identified with the tlacuache (a kind of opossum) and with the land: "Estaban hacinados en manada . . . con los sombreros de petate en las manos los hombres y las mujeres cortadas por un gesto de terror. Los calzones y las camisas de manta trigueña pardeaban en la indefinible coloración de la tierra" (p.16). This may be a pictorially vivid means of evocation but it dehumanizes the Indians. Again, although the plight these Indians suffer may be of universal application, it is not sufficiently individualized to make it anything more than symbolic: "La tremenda carga de vivir sin esperanza. Condenados. Condenados. Condenados" (p.30).

The reason for such an approach to the Indian is that El resplandor, though it has been classified as indigenista, is primarily a novel of the failed Revolution with a pessimistic cyclical view of Mexican history. These Otomíes have suffered oppression and exploitation from the time of the Aztecs to the present day. The Revolution, the most recent supposed change, proved ineffectual: "Al día siguiente, todo estaba lo mismo que antes. Nada había cambiado sobre la faz del planeta" (p.105). Like the Indians in López y Fuentes's Tierra (1932) or Azuela's San Gabriel de Valdivias: comunidad indígena (1938), Magdaleno's Otomíes are campesinos and underdogs, Indians in little more than name.

Looking back on these four novels, it is evident that one of the pitfalls that befell literary indigenismo in Mexico was a confusion with other ideological preoccupations of the time. This inevitably diluted the indigenista impact, while the other preoccupations perhaps suffered less from the Indian leanings.

Leaving behind the question of confused concerns, we turn now to the three main pitfalls affecting the early indigenista novel: an ideological thrust, a folkloric emphasis, and a lack of unity.

The ideological thrust

El indio⁹ and Lola Casanova¹⁰ are the novels which perhaps best exemplify the dangers of the ideological thrust. Both are intent on convincing the reader that the Indian is an admirable being, in tune with Nature; both authors put the lesson of their story first and are content to use rather flat characters to convey it to us; both novels include whole chapters intended almost exclusively for pedagogic purposes.

The Romantic glorification of Man in the natural state is unmistakable in El indio. Phrases like the following reveal López y Fuentes's open idealization of the Indian: "Estatua en movimiento, hecha de cedro nuevo" (p.17); "El torso, elástico y musculoso, abillantado por el sudor" (p.53). The gross contrast

9. Gregorio López y Fuentes, El indio, 6th edition (Mexico: Porrúa, 1974). All subsequent references are to this edition.

10. Francisco Rojas González, Lola Casanova (Mexico: EDIAPSA, 1947). All subsequent references are to this edition.

offered by the white man, described while swimming, emphasizes the point: "¡Qué abdómenes tan abultados y en tan denigrante desproporción con piernas y brazos!" (p.45).

In Lola Casanova, a novel based on events last century in the Northern Mexican state of Sonora, we find the Seri Indian leader, Coyote, similarly idealized, being first presented to the reader as a "joven hercúleo y de facciones bellas por bravías" (p.30). His son, too, is physically "ideal": "Luengo de piernas, el pecho amplio y la cabeza bien sentada sobre un cuello robusto, cubierto por exuberante cabellera lacia y lustrosa" (p.225). In addition, Rojas González makes Lola, his white heroine, who is captured by Coyote and absorbed into the Seri tribe, realize that, "la rusticidad no es asquerosa; los vicios son repugnantes" (p.203) and he criticizes the trappings of "civilization" that have hidden her natural beauty: "los pudibundos y chabacanos ropajes que encubrieran, por años, la audaz trayectoria curvilínea, el milagro sonrosado de la carne y la armonía del conjunto de excelencia que permanecieron siempre ocultas a las miradas torcidas por una ética mezquina y por el vicio del recato" (p.211). Thus each author attempts to indoctrinate us into preference for the natural life.

Both these novels, being primarily concerned with the ideological implications of their story, pay little attention to the important matter of realistic characterization and opt, instead, for simple stereotypes. In Rojas González's novel, Lola is a conventional heroine, entirely virtuous, and Coyote a Romantic hero. Captain Ariza, Lola's ageing suitor, is a totally antipathetic, anti-Indian villain who, in contrast to Coyote, the

noble savage, epitomizes all the evils of civilization. Admittedly, there are more benevolent whites, like Lola's devoted nanny, and also less idyllic Indians: Huevo Zaino, Coyote's rival, and his wife, Tórtola Parda, are eager for power and capable of foul play to achieve their designs. Nonetheless, we are still dealing with reductive figures which, while they may make the ideological burden of the story plain, do nothing for a realistic presentation of character and situation.

In El indio we again find stereotypes, both among the Indians and the whites. The early part of the novel is very much an allegorical evocation of the Indian situation in Mexico. For the purposes of this instructive allegory, López y Fuentes prefers to use typical figures who are not even individualized by name but are referred to by their function or prime characteristic: el intérprete; el presidente municipal; el guía; el viejo; el lisiado.

Some critics accept this approach without question: Eustasio Fernández Agüera explains that López y Fuentes "no nos da a conocer personajes bien delineados porque está interesado en presentar la masa"¹¹ while Antonio Magaña Esquivel reminds us that here the author was intent on producing "el 'retrato' del indio, como ser genérico, en abstracto".¹² Unfortunately, as Enrique Anderson Imbert points out, this "actitud tan abstracta . . . quita relieve a los personajes".¹³ Individualization does not necessarily

11. "La proyección social en las novelas de Gregorio López y Fuentes" (unpublished doctoral thesis, Mexico: UNAM, Filosofía y Letras, 1960), p.107.

12. Prologue to El indio (Mexico, 1974), p.xix.

13. Historia de la literatura hispanoamericana, 2 vols (Mexico, 1954), II: Época contemporánea, p.83.

exclude the symbolic, representational effect López y Fuentes was seeking whereas anonymity, as John Brushwood rightly suggests, fails to evoke the sympathy the reader would otherwise have felt for individualized characters.¹⁴

López y Fuentes's refusal to create personalized individuals and the consequent diminution in reader identification is amply evident in the scene during the smallpox epidemic, where the crippled youth discovers the bodies of the woman he was previously to have married and her baby. There is a clear depersonalization here of el lisiado's thoughts and actions. His idea of giving the young woman cool water is expressed impersonally: "Para un febricitante, ¡qué presente más grato que el agua fresca!" (p.96); his presuming she is only asleep is expressed with similar lack of personal involvement: "al parecer profundamente dormida" (p.96); his reaction upon touching the cold, dead child, yet again an impersonal expression: "La mano se contrajo" (p.96). The overall effect is that the reader is not encouraged to feel for el lisiado as an individual in a universally comprehensible situation but, instead, is kept at a distance.

Again in evidence of López y Fuentes's lack of full characterization we have the betrayal of the Indians of the ranchería by the young Indian teacher. We can only presume that his volte-face was due to the corruption of city life for we are given no insight into his character, only the barest of facts: at the end of the penultimate chapter, "surgió el líder" (p.117); at

14. Mexico in its Novel: A Nation's Search for Identity (Austin & London, 1966), p.216.

the end, "el líder goza de buena situación en la ciudad" (p.123).

The teacher's volte-face aptly exemplifies the betrayal of the ideals of the Revolution by self-seeking individuals, as does the new road which the Indians must work on although in the end it does not go to their village. The building of the road also exemplifies antagonism between Church and State, for the Indians must devote two days a week to the building of a church as well as two for the construction of the road. Such are the less obtrusive ideological implications of El indio. Unfortunately, the fact that El indio is a thesis novel is sometimes much more evident.

The most directly didactic section of El indio and the part which most clearly reveals the dangers of the ideological thrust is Chapter 5: "Castigo". Here the use of mouthpiece characters is both clumsy and simplistic, resulting in a scene little more exciting than a Platonic dialogue. Once the president and the secretary have expressed the anti-Indian point of view, the teacher suggests ideas for solving the Indian problem. After enumerating some of the opinions of the time, he gives his — and presumably the author's own — proposal: a solution based on the vague idea of restoring confidence between Indian and white man. In this chapter the conversational form provides only the thinnest veneer over the ideological content, producing an artistically infelicitous close to Part I of the novel, which otherwise, with its four allegorical opening chapters, would have stood as a successful unit.

Lola Casanova contains some similarly infelicitous didactic episodes. Chapter 4, "Las tardeadas de Casanova", preaches the

charitable, though paternalistic, ideals of early indigenismo, by means of a discussion about the Indian problem, specifically in relation to the Seris. Apparently intended as a summary of attitudes through the centuries rather than an exposé of the author's own views, this tertulia discussion exposes the contrast of opinions between Liberals and Conservatives in nineteenth-century Mexico — the period of the historical Lola — while the main argument pits the views of Las Casas (represented by Don Carbonato) against those of Sepúlveda (argued by Antonio Vega).

Admittedly, this chapter fits more satisfactorily into the main body of the novel than did El indio's Chapter 5, for it is plausibly introduced by comments on Indalecio, the little Seri boy who has been taken into the Casanova household. Furthermore, the validity of the more charitable Las Casas outlook is borne out early in the novel by the success of Padre Trueba's mission settlement, before it was destroyed by Ariza; on the other hand, the less humane attitude, which regards the Indian as a mere animal to be eradicated, is implicitly repudiated by its being epitomized in Ariza, the villain. Nonetheless, the form of this chapter is too undisguisedly didactic not to constitute a literary shortcoming.

Another doctrinaire piece comes in Chapter 23, "Un plan criollo", where Lola encourages the Seris, now her adopted people, to trade with the whites for their own benefit: "Aprovechemos de ellos lo bueno y reservémonos lo mejor de nosotros" (p.242). This section scarcely prepares us, however, for the final chapter of the novel, which consists of an imposition of the author's views in a glorification of miscegenation. Joseph Sommers rightly

laments that "La tesis del autor, su solución y su programa, no se infiere del argumento híbrida sino, antes bien, agrégase bajo la forma de un epílogo para el que no se han echado las bases preparatorias".¹⁵ For example, there is no logical reason for the Seri splinter group, led by Huevo Zaino and his wife, to deteriorate as they do into poverty, immorality, and alcoholism, leading to measures to put an end to the tribe, while the progressive group, led by Lola after her husband Coyote's death, embrace mestizaje and flourish. Since both groups came from the Seris that were a source of Romantic idealization earlier in the novel, such an outcome can only be attributed to the imposition of the author's own ideological convictions.

We also notice significant contradictions in this final chapter. While at one moment the author deprecates the "hábitos ancestrales" (p.269) of the splinter group he then goes on to lament the loss of their "antiguas costumbres" (p.270). Two different ideological outlooks are in conflict here: the progressive and the Romantic. Similarly, he puts over as pernicious the splinter group's contact with "la canalla mestiza" (p.270) — presumably referring to the yoris (whites) — yet shows Lola's Seri group reaping benefit from contact with these whites.

To make matters worse, the author's exaltation of mestizaje and the hombre nuevo — a utopic kind of raza cósmica — is confused by his inconsistent use of the word mestizo. As opposed to the Seri Indians he speaks of yoris and blancos but

15. Joseph Sommers, Francisco Rojas González: exponente literario del nacionalismo mexicano (Xalapa, Mexico: Universidad Veracruzana, 1966), pp.97-98.

also of "el mestizo sonorense" (p.267) and "nosotros los mestizos" (p.43, at the tertulia). While all these terms refer to the same sector of the population, the mestizos mentioned here are clearly not equivalent to the mestizo of Rojas González's utopic dream: the hombre nuevo.

All in all, the final chapter of Lola Casanova reveals the potentially disastrous consequences of an uncurbed ideological thrust, imposed on a novel without regard for contextual validity nor for the literary art of the novel.

The folkloric emphasis

While too little concern for the Indian idiosyncrasy can, as in El resplandor and La rebelión de los colgados, lead to figures who are only Indian in name, too great a preoccupation with its external manifestations can lead to a folkloric emphasis which is little more than costumbrismo. El indio, Guelaguetza,¹⁶ Donde crecen los tepozanes,¹⁷ Nayar, and, to a lesser extent, Lola Casanova are cases in point.

The most extreme case of the folkloric emphasis is Barriga Rivas's Guelaguetza, subtitled novela oaxaqueña. In fact, it is not so much a novel but more a series of indigenista cuadros de costumbres packed in around a tenuous story-line about a Zapotec Indian and his betrothed whose love is thwarted by the cacique.

16. Rogelio Barriga Rivas, Guelaguetza: novela oaxaqueña (Mexico: Cortés, 1947). All subsequent references are to this edition.

17. Miguel N. Lira, Donde crecen los tepozanes (Mexico: EDIAPSA, 1947). All subsequent references are to this edition.

The novel opens with the description of a colourful indigenous procession: eight pages where little happens except Fulgencio's symbolic gesture of helping María Andrea with her basket of flowers: a picturesque proposal of marriage. Nor is Barriga Rivas satisfied with including only local Indian customs in this novela oaxaqueña for in Chapter 4, the title chapter, he describes over half a dozen other Indian groups in festive procession, completing the chapter with their regional songs. The description contributes nothing functionally to the plot nor has it any interest for the "protagonists" since Fulgencio is only there to watch María Andrea. Consequently, it is tempting for the reader simply to pass these pages over.

One further example demonstrates the lengths to which the author will go to bring in folkloric material. Since the plot does not cater for a wedding scene, Barriga Rivas makes Fulgencio imagine what the ceremony would be like if his rival, the cacique, were to marry María Andrea. Despite the personal interest which presumably would motivate such thoughts and the potential scope for probing Fulgencio's inner sentiments, the description is given in general impersonal terms, the details being relevant only to the costumbrista content: "Esa noche . . . iba a tener lugar 'la bendición' de los novios Llegarían los padrinos Entrarían en la casa . . . solicitaría la anuencia del padre de la novia El futuro suegro llamaría a su hija . . ." (pp.147-48). The whole scene is given in the conditional tense, with the exception of the direct speech of the ceremony. Only once does Fulgencio mention by name María Andrea, her father, and his own rival, Don Fortunato. Otherwise, the impersonal

denominations, "la novia", "el padre", and "el novio" are used, denoting a lack of personal involvement of a degree which is surely quite unconvincing for a man in Fulgencio's position.

Miguel Lira's Donde crecen los tepozanes has been described by Rodríguez Chicharro in terms which seem to place it on a par with Guelaguetza. He regards Lira's novel as a mediocre one, overloaded with costumbrista and folkloric details and with too little characterization and no penetration into the Indian heart and mind.¹⁸ Not all critics have been so hard on this novel: Magaña Esquivel even rates it as "encomiable".¹⁹ An examination of the text does reveal that, while there is a generous amount of costumbrista material, the author has made a more systematic attempt than Barriga Rivas to integrate it.

The major instance of such material in Donde crecen los tepozanes is another wedding ceremony. Although the account begins with an authorial reminder that the pagan ceremony must be carried out before the Christian one, the typicality of events is not too heavily dwelt upon: "Juan llevó a la boca de María Preciosa los cuatro primeros bocados de la comida, y María Preciosa le correspondió con los cuatro segundos. El acto solemne, el símbolo de que quedaban unidos por siempre, así había terminado" (p.131). Also, there are added details which add a touch of real life to the scene, like the fact that María Preciosa's boots hurt her and that the couple are eager to consummate the marriage.

18. "La novela indigenista mexicana", p.155.

19. Antonio Magaña Esquivel, "Miguel N. Lira, novelista", El Nacional, 18 March 1965, p.3.

Before the next typical piece, Lira inserts a short chapter without costumbrista details where Gabriel el loco, another admirer, speaks to María Preciosa. This has the effect of diluting the picturesque nature of the wedding festivities. Unfortunately, this wise move on the author's part is largely negated by the subsequent detailed description of Juan's and the dancers' attire and inclusion of all the verses sung by the crowd.²⁰ At least, however, unlike Barriga Rivas, Lira does individualize the principal figures, although this would have been more effective in escaping pure costumbrismo had the characterization been fuller.

In the case of the wedding festivities, Lira is evidently conscious that his costumbrismo must be diluted and integrated. However, he does not maintain this approach: Chapter 20, describing a fair, is simply a picturesque extra. Although Juan is there with María Preciosa, the motive of the outing being to distract her from her worries, nothing of import occurs while they are at the fair. Again we are dealing with costumbrista material, introduced for love of the topic but with no clear literary functionality.

In the more indigenista part of Nayar, we are again aware that the author is bringing in typical material for its own sake. Chapter 20 involves the attempted cure by a Huichol Indian hechicero of a youth with venereal disease. The mere presence of Ramón and the narrator is scarcely sufficient to justify the

20. This may derive from an earlier theatrical version of the story by Lira.

inclusion of the event. Had the chapter offered an insight into the witch-doctor's world-view, this would perhaps have made its inclusion more valid, but the narrator's uncommitted outside view is evident in his description of the hechicero's actions: "como si fuera ilusionista que intentara sorprendernos" (p.129).

Another revealing inclusion in Navar in this context is the latter part of Chapter 21, the Huichol expedition to collect peyote. Its inclusion is akin to that of the wedding ceremony in Guelaguetza. Prior to the beginning of the journey, the first-person narrator clearly establishes that Ramón and he, as non-Indians, are not permitted to attend and they are left behind: "Y a la media noche de ese día, sin que sintiéramos, salieron furtivamente los huicholes" (p.138). However, Menéndez is unwilling to forego description of this typical incident and includes it, nonetheless, as a continuation of the narrator's story, thus breaking with his self-imposed first-person narratorial stance. Clearly, the folkloric emphasis is being given priority regardless of technical considerations.

One of López y Fuentes's prime motives in writing El indio -- apart from his ideological preoccupations -- was to portray the folk customs of the Indians of the Veracruz Huasteca, where he spent his childhood. Many critics have praised the memorable descriptions in El indio: the fishing scene; the crossing of the river on a log; the hunting scene; the brujerías In themselves, undoubtedly, these are admirable. López y Fuentes's powers of description render them much more gripping and evocative than the quaint and idyllic customs related by Barriga Rivas. However, our purpose here is to consider their contribution to

El indio as a novel (it is, after all, subtitled novela mexicana) and also their contribution to the indigenista current.

Most of the cuadros in El indio, with the exception of the largely gratuitous fishing scene, are linked in some way to el lisiado whose story, after his injury at the hands of the white intruders, forms the vague thread which holds the novel together. It is due to a quarrel between the families of el lisiado, his rival, and the girl who was eventually given to the healthier of the two men that the matter of the brujerías comes in; the hunting scene involves el lisiado's rival and his death; the crossing of the river by log el lisiado's father, who is drowned; the volador fiesta is witnessed by el lisiado, with whom we sympathize, while his rival participates. All these scenes are, therefore, presented as part of the story. Nonetheless, the impression remains that the story has been very much built around them rather than these cuadros being a logical result of the story.

Even if we were to accept López y Fuentes's cuadros as an integral part of the novel, we might still question whether such scenes — full as they are of Indian content — actually bring the author any closer to achieving that key indigenista concern: the genuine expression of the Indian world-view. One critic writing on El indio and also Los peregrinos inmóviles claims that, "En estas dos novelas podemos tener una idea cabal y bastante clara de la psicología del indio, basada en la presentación de de todos los aspectos exteriores".²¹ However, the anomaly of

21. Rosemary Gould de Madrid, "El indio y el campo en algunas novelas de la Revolución Mexicana" (unpublished Master's thesis, Mexico: UNAM, Escuela de Verano, 1964), p.112.

this assertion highlights the crux of the matter: how can the psychology of the Indian be appreciated from "external aspects" which are, by their nature, impersonal and superficial? López y Fuentes's standpoint, like that of the young Alejo Carpentier describing the ñañigo ceremonies of the blacks in Cuba in ¡Ecue-Yamba-O!, is that of the outsider.

His outside view is plain to see, even in the very title of the chapter that narrates the brujerías. Rather than attempt to explore in depth the Indian outlook here, López y Fuentes is content to narrate the external details of black magic, summing them up under the title: "Superstición". In the case of the volador fiesta he gives vivid descriptions but never hints that there is an ancestral belief at the root of this dangerous celebration. Throughout the novel, the lack of penetration of the indigenous cosmovisión is, of course, made worse by the lack of successful individual characterization, which might have given us an insight into an indigenous mind.

Rojas González, too, like so many other indigenista novelists, is criticized for the inclusion in Lola Casanova of an excess of ethnographic, costumbrista matter for its own sake. While Joseph Sommers holds that Rojas González's anthropologically oriented description of Seri life saves this novel from superficiality and sentimentalism²² (and, certainly, it is less quaint and idyllic than what Barriga Rivas narrates) it cannot be denied that such scenes sometimes appear superfluous. We can accept, for example, the relation of Coyote's pruebas in the chapter, "El

22. Francisco Rojas González, p.104.

señor de la pelea", and the details concerning the collection of poison (p.113) in preparation for war, for the one actively concerns a central character while the other is functionally bound up with the development of the plot. However, many of Lola's so-called discoveries of the interior being of the Seris — "Así es como la blanca puede penetrar hasta los repliegues del alma india" (p.227) — lack such relevance.

A major example of this is the first half of the chapter, "La casa de las doncellas heridas", which deals with ritual relating to girls at puberty and the ceremony of their acceptance as adult women. The events have nothing to do with any known character nor the progress of the plot. Rather, the pages are lamely joined on to the rest of the chapter and to the novel as a whole with the sentence which begins the following section: "Dolores fué testigo alucinado de aquellos sucesos" (p.173). On such occasions we can only agree with Mary Ann Low, who holds that Rojas González's excessive concern with ethnological details, "se deja ver hasta tal punto que pierde importancia, en ocasiones, lo novelesco frente a lo étnico".²³ Indeed, we might apply such a comment to all the novels discussed in this subsection.

Lack of unity

The two novels which are concerned with the mestizo as well as the Indian, Los peregrinos inmóviles and Nayar, suffer from a

23. "Francisco Rojas González, novelista" (unpublished Master's thesis, Mexico: UNAM, Escuela de Verano, 1957), p.97.

lack of unity partly because of this duality. In Los peregrinos inmóviles this is manifested in tone as well as content. Part II, the part which is most Indian-oriented, has a timeless, allegorical air to it and, therefore, despite its own merits as a short piece, seems out of place sandwiched between the mundane mestizo-oriented material of Parts I and III. This unhappy mix is not helped by the often forced-seeming plot connections between the parts. Marcos, the first-person narrator of Part II, is the wise old man of the village in Part I. The only motive for his narration, which forms Part II, is, however, that he is asked his age: "la pregunta que al parecer abrió el manantial de los recuerdos" (p.58). After the end of Part II, the link back to the present in the village is equally arbitrary: "Desde que el viejo Marcos puso puntos suspensivos a su relato y se quedó, al parecer dormido en su mismo sitio . . . " (p.199). An attempted link between the content of Part II and III is no more satisfactory: "Su postura y su silueta cómo recordaban el viejo de que él mismo había hablado, el que se quedó muerto entre las raíces de un árbol, durante la segunda noche de peregrinación" (pp.199-200). There is also an unsubtle effort to link Parts I and III: "¿Dónde estarían Antonio y su hija?" (p.200), which is doubly unsuccessful as the events of Part I were not really gripping enough to have left the reader greatly curious about their outcome. Such vestigial efforts to establish unity cannot really disguise the fact that Part II is so different from the others.

Navar's lack of unity, in that it is neither wholly indigenista nor simply the story of the mestizo's quest for identity is, in fact, symptomatic of a lack of thematic unity

throughout. Rodríguez Chicharro has commented on Nayar: "son escenas bien escritas y lógicamente desarrolladas, mas inconexas".²⁴ Indeed, Menéndez gives us excellent "scenes" through the novel, ranging from the short phrase or paragraph — often a simple metaphor or extended image — to the length of a whole chapter. In fact, Schmidt notes the autonomy of certain chapters which could stand alone as short stories.²⁵ This, however, does not ensure the success of Nayar as a novel for, while certain scenes or evocations stand out and are meaningful in themselves, the overall effect remains disjointed.

We have such fragmentation on a small scale at the beginning of Chapter 16 (p.111) where even successive paragraphs have no connection. The main lack of unity, however, evident especially in the more indigenista section, is from chapter to chapter. This is clear, for example, in three successive chapters: 20, 21, and 22, where very different topics, largely unrelated to one another, are simply juxtaposed: the Huichol hechicero, the peyote expedition, and the almost legendary tale of Lozada, "el Tigre de Alica", who fought to make an independent country of the Nayarit region in the second half of the nineteenth century.

Chávez Camacho's novel, Cajeme,²⁶ suffers a similar problem and is, consequently, described by Rodríguez Chicharro as "un

24. "La novela indigenista mexicana", p.135.

25. Donald Lee Schmidt, "Changing Narrative Techniques in the Mexican indigenista Novel" (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Kansas, 1972), p.116.

26. Armando Chávez Camacho, Cajeme: novela de indios, 2nd edition (Mexico: Porrúa, 1967). All subsequent references are to this edition.

conjunto de relatos defectuosamente hilvanados".²⁷ From the title, one might expect that this novel would concern the Yaqui Indian hero José María Leyva (1863-87), alias Cajeme (meaning "blood-thirsty"), who was the champion of Yaqui independence and the leader of Indian resistance to the white man in Northern Mexico. However, the subtitle, novela de indios, reveals a more diverse intention, confirmed by the author's assertion in the Prologue that his book "quiso recoger el disperso mundo indígena de mi tierra, Sonora" (p.11).

Cajeme does reveal some attempts on the part of the author to draw together the varied content, though this is not an unqualified success. The subject of Cajeme himself, whose story is built up through a collection of hearsay and historical information, gives some factual unity to certain parts of the novel. However, symbolic as Cajeme may be of the Yaqui, he cannot really justify the inclusion of more diverse Indian content.

There is another figure, however, who is used by Chávez Camacho as a linking device. This is el jorobado, a hunch-backed, cross-eyed Pima Indian who, because his deformities would lead no-one to credit him with any importance, was given the mission of taking a message from the Pimas to Cajeme. It is through his search for Cajeme, during which he finds out many details about the Yaqui leader and his exploits, that the story of Cajeme is built up. In addition, el jorobado's travels and encounters form the pretext for including the more disparate Indian lore: stories and information which he picks up or transmits on his way.

Initially, el jorobado is well exploited as a linking device. In Chapter 1 we meet him witnessing a conversation

27. "La novela indigenista mexicana", p.129.

concerning Cajeme's victory at the battle of Capetemaya; Chapter 2 reinforces el jorobado's importance and our interest in him by concentrating on him; Chapter 3 tells of the corpses after the battle of Capetemaya, putting this over as el jorobado's vivid personal impression. However, after this promising start, he ceases to be adequately employed as a structuring device. In many cases there is no hint of his presence and in some others his presence is forced upon the otherwise independent content: for example, at the end of the chapter, "El gran amor de Coyote Iguana", another version of the story of Lola Casanova, the author adds a postscript to imply that el jorobado had been listening to tale: "Bien empapado sobre los seris . . . ya se iba el jorobado . . . " (p.224).

In addition to el jorobado, the author makes a brief attempt to link chapters by a few parallel ideas or scenes. El jorobado hears of Cajeme's victory in Chapter 1 as he hides behind a mezquite cactus. It is also hiding behind a mezquite at the end that he witnesses Cajeme's death, shot by a firing squad. Returning to the beginning, a parting comment in Chapter 1 about being hanged from a jito tree is picked up in Chapter 2 when this is precisely what happens to el jorobado. The topic of the battle of Capetemaya links Chapters 1 and 3 while the topic of death links 3 and 4 (the latter about an individual death and beginning with a canCIÓN mortuaria) and leads on from the mention and act of hanging in Chapters 1 and 2. Such attempts at bonding the chapters together, however, seem to be largely abandoned after this and we are left with a book that Meinhardt justifiably

describes as a "hodge podge of Indian lore".²⁸

As in Nayar, the diversity of topics and cuadros gives little scope for unity: a velorio with inclusion of a curandera's skills (the longest chapter, itself lacking unity of conception); the legend of the talking tree; a Yaqui man's experience of thirst in the desert; tales of severe Yaqui justice; the story of Lola Casanova and the Seris; the Fiesta of Nuestra Señora del Camino (another piece of speculative costumbrismo); the Ópatas' battles against the whites . . . all these disparate elements and more, along with the material about Cajeme and his war exploits, make up Cajeme: novela de indios. Chávez Camacho does make limited attempts to unite all this but we cannot help concluding with Rodríguez Chicharro: "Priva, pues, en Cajeme, el caos".²⁹

The problem of lack of unity crops up to a greater or lesser degree with most of the early indigenista novels, the major exception being El resplandor, which, significantly, is not greatly concerned with the Indian per se. The urge to include as much typical material as possible about the Indians leads to Part II of El indio being a collection of cuadros de costumbres, dramatized and built on to a tenuous story-line: that of el lisiado. The same only more so is true of Guelaguetza while Lira's Donde crecen los tepozanes again offers a fair amount of artistically extraneous costumbrista material. Lola Casanova provides ethnic extras from time to time and Cajeme and Nayar,

28. Warren Lee Meinhardt, "The Mexican Indianist Novel: 1910-1960" (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of California, Berkeley, 1965), p.66.

29. "La novela indigenista mexicana", p.130.

as we have seen, present mixed bags of Indian-related lore with little functional linkage.

From the foregoing criticisms of the early indigenista novels in Mexico we can appreciate the difficulties encountered by the pioneer indigenistas, difficulties which Miguel Ángel Asturias and Alejo Carpentier came across at much the same time. While the Mexican indigenistas had not really defined their priorities at this early stage, Carpentier realized, after failing as a white observer in his first novel to penetrate fully into the mentality of the Cuban negroes, that he was faced with a double objective: on the one hand, the need to get behind the typical and the picturesque to reach an inner vision of the native mentality; on the other, the duty to acquire the technical proficiency necessary to put over this cosmovisión in a suitable literary form.³⁰

It is hardly surprising that the early Mexican indigenistas did not succeed in satisfying this dual imperative for, as a group, they lacked the insight and creative ability of a Carpentier or an Asturias. Nonetheless, as we now hope to show, their work did reveal potential lines of development and some success in overcoming a few key problems. In this respect, they are the true founders of the indigenista genre in Mexico.

30. See, inter alia, his article of 1931, "América ante la joven literatura europea", Crónicas, 2 vols (Havana, 1976), II, pp.482-83, and the later retrospective "Problemática de la actual novela latinoamericana" in Tientos y diferencias (Mexico, 1964), especially pp.13-15.

POSSIBILITIES

Despite the evident pitfalls, most of the early indigenista novels, with the exception of Guelaguetza and La rebelión de los colgados, offer positive contributions to the genre. On the whole, such contributions are of a fairly diverse nature. For this reason, it is suitable, initially, to take each novel separately, the most logical order being chronological.

The two most striking features of El indio are its cuadros de costumbres and the allegorical first four chapters. While clearly it would have been artistically desirable to have had López y Fuentes's cuadros de costumbres more fully integrated into the novel, we cannot deny that they are highly evocative pieces in themselves. We may lament the tenuous plot and lack of unity which derive from their being very much the raison d'être of El indio but at the same time we recognize their salient position as admirable descriptive pieces. The fishing scene is a typical example:

Comenzó el arreo. Era una hilera chapoteante. Iban mujeres y hombres casi juntos. Los que esgrimían chuzos, hurgaban en las grandes piedras, espantando las mojarras morosas. Algunos hundían en las aguas bordones nuevos, libres de cáscara, para que la blancura de la madera fuera eficaz espantajo.

Los que portaban atarrayas eran los más alertos: con el centro de la red entre los dientes y la orla sobre el antebrazo, listos para lanzarla en cuanto se pusiera a tiro una presa. Acorralados, los peces comenzaban a pasar, a virar, girando como pequeñas sombras bajo el agua. Un joven lanzó de pronto su carrizo, el cual, tras algunas nerviosas sacudidas, comenzó a cortar el agua casi perpendicularmente a la superficie. (p.43)

Clearly, the cuadro de costumbres was López y Fuentes's forte. Not surprisingly, much of his novelistic production was

derived from descriptive articles which he published from 1923 in El Universal as a series entitled, La novela diaria de la vida real.

The other prime distinguishing feature of El indio lies in its allegorical first four chapters. Their very titles lead us to perceive a parallel with the Conquest: "Oro"; "Mestizaje"; "Águila que cae" (the meaning of Cuauhtémoc); "Guerra". However, the contents can also be taken as an account of present-day events, with the arrival of "white" adventurers to an Indian settlement, the rape of one of the Indian girls, the injury of the fine young man who becomes el lisiado, and the ensuing conflict. As Alegría remarks, El indio floats in a kind of eternal present, with a few historical references, but finding common denominators between the centuries.³¹ The allegorical dimension lends a legend-like air to the early chapters of El indio, evoking a sense of the Indian past while still leaving room for inclusion of current circumstances. Past and present are successfully blended by López y Fuentes's often verbless description, capturing timeless scenes: "Por la tarde, como jornal, unos centavos y un trago de aguardiente. En los días de hambre, una medida de maíz y, si el amo es generoso, el mismo agasajo de alcohol" (p.10).

This allegorical section fusing past and present is, although only twenty-five pages long, clearly a valuable contribution to the indigenista genre and heralds the approach adopted in later years by Rosario Castellanos in her short story: "La muerte del tigre", the opening story of Ciudad Real (1962).

El resplandor, unlike the other early indigenista novels,

31. Breve historia, p.167.

is significant because of its technical apportations. Indeed, Rodríguez Chicharro has remarked that, technically, it is "un libro perfecto".³² A thorough study of this novel, concentrating on its narrative technique, has been carried out by D.L. Schmidt, who notes in particular Magdaleno's techniques of psychological interiorization: internal analysis, interior monologue, and stream of consciousness (p.64). However, as we have already hinted earlier in this chapter, these and other technical innovations do not, in the case of this borderline indigenista novel, enhance the presentation of the indigenous world-view and this clearly reduces their significance for the indigenista genre.

El resplandor is unusual in that it satisfies the second part of Carpentier's double objective while passing over the first. Nevertheless, the presence of such technical proficiency in this 1930s novel offers a foretaste of the technical advances to be made in interiorization by Rosario Castellanos, who satisfies both prerequisites. In her Oficio de tinieblas (1962), technical proficiency is no longer superfluous as regards the Indian but, rather, it constitutes the key to her presentation of Indian character and the penetration of an indigenous mind.

Nayar gives us a preview of another feature of Oficio de tinieblas. Menéndez pre-empts Castellanos's presentation of the indigenous tendency towards mitificación in his chapter concerning Lozada, "el Tigre de Alica". In Menéndez's novel, the explanation of Lozada's failure to liberate the indigenous peoples of Northern Mexico reveals these Indians' rationalization of their

32. "La novela indigenista mexicana", p.170.

disillusionment, incorporating it into their folklore: "Dominó mucho tiempo, mucho tiempo, y los dioses se enojaron porque no libertaba a sus hermanos. Entonces le quitaron el caballo blanco y rompieron su machete y dejaron que lo vencieran y que lo mataran . . . " (p.150). We have a similar mythicizing on the part of the nana at the end of Oficio de tinieblas. On both occasions, the created myth has ethical and socio-political implications which seek to justify the status quo.

Another of Menéndez's breakthroughs is in language. Nayar is distinguished by its lyrical prose. While this cannot entirely redeem the novel's other less satisfactory aspects, it, nonetheless, sets Menéndez apart as a forerunner of the mode of expression used in later years by Rosario Castellanos and Carlo Antonio Castro, both of them, like Menéndez, also poets.

While some critics have criticized Menéndez for his lack of social protest,³³ a closer examination reveals that his poetic mode of expression enables him to voice protest in a subtle fashion, without the propagandistic note we find, for example, in Traven's novels. When the Indian washerwomen, who are completely apart from the conflict of the cristero revolt, are killed during a shooting practice, the brutality of the scene is not dwelt upon. Rather, Menéndez recounts their death simply and briefly: "No quedó una viva, ni para remedio" (p.201) and suggests the gentle passivity of the women in death as in life: "Algunas, nomás se ladearon como para acostarse en el río" (p.201). Our sense of

33. Rodríguez Chicharro, "La novela indigenista mexicana", pp.135-36 and Low, p.69.



pity is heightened by avoiding concentration on the slaughter:

"Las ropas — camisas, calzones, huipiles — extendidas sobre el agua, iban a toda corriente" (p.201) while the women are described "como garzas morenas, sin sangre, porque hasta la sangre se la llevó lagua" [sic] (p.202). The evocation here of the purity and innocence of the victims is a much more subtle and effective protest than a simple account of atrocities.

Social comment on the conflict between Indian and "white" is gently put over by poetic symbolism too. The description of the camichín creeper which Ramón cuts down in the jungle acquires a greater significance in the light of the rejection of Ramón and the narrator by another Indian tribe, before they meet the Coras:

El camichín — fuerte, voraz, imperialista — toca y sube a la palma como una caricia. Con tientos de ternura, lenta, dulcemente, se abraza a ella. Poco a poco la envuelve en tupida red y la conquista. Ya conquistada del todo, la oprime, la absorbe, la seca, y sobre las ramazones exhaustas, amarillas, se irgue potente y triunfal. (p.88)

A woman of the tribe brings this to mind by telling of a camichín creeper, granted permission to live in the shade of a ceiba tree, whose embrace of the tree became a stranglehold: "Así murieron los árboles frondosos" (p.93).

Menéndez revels in poetic description throughout the book. In the first part, before the mention of the Coras, this is evident chiefly in his description of Nature. In the indigenista section, as well as evoking Nature, it seems to enhance his vision of the Indian Weltanschauung. Even D.L. Schmidt, who regards Salinas, the narrator, as an outsider who does not share in the Cora cosmovisión (p.108), has to admit that, "Immersed in nature, Salinas experiences it in an immediate, sensory way that

brings his vision of the world close to that of the Indian" (p.111).

The evocative metaphorical language Menéndez puts in the mouths of the Indians at the time of crisis towards the end of the novel when the rains will not stop puts over both their belief in the rain god and their animistic world-view:

-Está hinchada la cara de la tierra porque no puede ver la cara del sol. (p.207)

-Una piedra preciosa, verde, es el corazón del maíz; pero, de seguir bajando tu agua, ya no la veremos transformada en oro. (p.208)

-Por el ancho campo los elotes lloran, con sus blancas barbas hacia bajo. (p.209)

While it cannot be denied that Menéndez uses metaphor and poetic expression for their own sake, it is significant that the narrator, his mouthpiece, does seem conscious that the key to reaching the Indian lies in a poetic and symbolic vision. Salinas gains the confidence of the revered old Indian, Tatoani Leandro, when their glances meet upon seeing the tragedy of a dead swallow falling from the air. The shared appreciation of the event establishes a certain communication: "El vió mi alma, yo ví la suya. Resultó que en las dos había golondrinas muertas" (p.145). The narrator's recognition and expression of the symbolism of the moment is what gains him entry to this Indian's confidence, for he has seen and expressed the moment from a point of view appreciated by the Indian: "-Tatoani Leandro: así vuelan y mueren los sueños" (p.145).

When we come to Los peregrinos inmóviles there is a hint of an attempt to achieve an inside view. López y Fuentes does endeavour, as Brushwood puts it, "not to see the Indian as 'other' but . . . see what 'other' signified from the standpoint of the

Indian" (p.231). In Part I we find a few comments like the following: "Unos preguntan por las ruinas que dejaron los antecesores; otros quieren estudiar nuestras costumbres típicas, y también han dado en venir los políticos, deseosos de remediar nuestra situación y de representarnos en los congresos" (p.15). Nonetheless, it takes a certain detachment to regard one's own customs as "nuestras costumbres típicas" and, really, in Part I we find that this apparent "inside" view is often more that of the mestizo than of the Indian himself.

In Part II, where we are dealing with an itinerant Indian tribe, the process of mestizaje and all its side-effects is more convincingly portrayed from the Indian point of view: "¿Qué nos han dado estos hombres? Muchachos que no son de nuestro color, una lengua distinta a la de nuestros padres, sarna y viruelas" (p.176); "vimos con asombro que ya no éramos los mismos: hablábamos otra lengua y entre nosotros había caras que parecían miniatras de los amos" (p.179). Although this bid to put over an inside view is not as successful as it might have been, due to the lack of the deeper kind of character creation in Los peregrinos inmóviles, it is, nevertheless, a preliminary effort to gain the inside view that later indigenistas did succeed in maintaining.

Lira, too, particularly in the case of Tía Gregoria, who is the most successful piece of character creation in Donde crecen los tepozanes, does move towards an inside view of the Indian. We see this in his presentation of Tía Gregoria's witchcraft. Rather than betray the outside view of such matters evident in El indio, Lira puts over her witchcraft as something perfectly normal, part of her everyday life, thus avoiding creating any

barrier between himself or the reader and her dealings up in the mountains. He treats the matter casually, as if it were a case of living in the mountains for, say, reasons of health: "esa soledad era propicia a las prácticas de hechicería de la Tía Gregoria, porque más fácilmente se podía comunicar con el Maligno y preparaba mejor sus bebedizos y ungüentos con las yerbas de los cuatro caminos . . . " (pp.16-17).

When Tía Gregoria and María Preciosa say a few "prayers" to keep Juan safe there is no intrusive authorial mention of what everything signifies nor that such is the custom. The scene is self-explanatory: "La Tía Gregoria sacó de la cómoda unas ramitas secas de capulín y unos trozos de copal, y volvió al anafre, en cuya lumbre los fue quemando lentamente mientras decía . . . " (p.24). At the end of the ritual, the magical aspect blends naturally with the practical and domestic: "y en la lumbre del anafre que había servido para el conjuro, la Tía Gregoria puso a hervir una ollita con agua y hojas de naranjo, que era hora de dormirse y había que beber algo caliente para no sentir tanto el frío" (p.26).

There are a few isolated cases of possible penetration into the indigenous mode of thought in Lola Casanova. The most striking is the Indian interpretation of Lola's curing a little boy with a supurating hand, the result of having cut himself while polishing a shark's tooth. Although all she did was to boil up a rag torn from her clothes and clean and bind the wound with it, the process is interpreted by the indigenous mind as a magical process in an animistic world:

"El colmillo transmite al cuerpo del herido el alma perversa del tiburón. Allí chupa la sangre y corroe las

carnes hasta dejarlas verdes por falta de jugo . . . Si entonces no interviene una mujer blanca, la víctima de la bestia está condenado a morir . . . Sin embargo, este arbitrio resultará vano, de no mediar el agua dulce, extraída precisamente de la tinaja de Bahía Kino y hervida con catorce leños de mezquite y una brazada de hojarasca de kubón . . . Dentro del cacharro deberá cocerse un trozo de tela del atavío de una yori. El agua recogerá los humores de la pestilente mujer blanca, ingratos para el olfato del mar y de sus hijos predilectos los tiburones . . . La bestia dueña del cuerpo enfermo, al percibir la fetidez, pretenderá huir; pero topará con la tela liada en la mano, la que le impedirá volver a la mar . . . Entonces el alma del tiburón perecerá sofocada por la ingrata pestilencia de la carne yori . . ." (p.187)

Unfortunately, the insight into the Indian mind offered by this passage is not supported by other passages of comparable depth. Nonetheless, it still marks an advance which later indigenistas develop.

The principal contribution of Lola Casanova to the development of the indigenista genre is, in fact, in a different area: that of structural unity. If we disregard the ideologically motivated final chapter, which mars this novel's literary coherence, we do get the impression that Lola Casanova is a novel whose author is clearly conscious of creating more than merely a lengthy narrative. Rojas González is dealing with contact between two different worlds, the Indian and the non-Indian. His juxtaposition and integration of these two worlds in his novel is a structural advance for Mexican literary indigenismo, heralding the achievement of Rosario Castellanos's Oficio de tinieblas, likewise a full-length novel dealing with the conflict between two such worlds.

The main point of contact between the whites of the port of Guaymas and the Indians is Lola's capture by the Seris. Here, the two story-lines are combined, with our

protagonist, Lola, remaining in a central position. She becomes integrated into Seri life, later to lead her adopted people out of isolation to trade relations with the whites.

In the initial chapters a balance is set out between the Indians and the whites. Also the basic elements of the plot are established, including motivation for an Indian attack: Chapter 1 introduces, by presence or reference, all the central figures in Guaymas: Lola, her father, Captain Ariza, and Juan Vega while the existence of the Indians as a separate group is also established; Chapter 2 presents a preliminary moment of contact between the two groups with Ariza's destruction of a Seri village and the bringing back of the Seri boy, Indalecio, to the Casanova household (he later serves as Lola's friend and interpreter amongst the Seris); Chapter 3 describes the journey of the surviving Seris to a new place to settle; Chapter 4 is set amongst the whites of Guaymas but filling in background on the Indians through conversation and discussion. Subsequently, until nearing the centre of the novel, the chapters alternate between Indians and whites which, although a fairly mechanical approach, achieves the necessary balance between the two worlds.

The encounter between the two races when the Seris attack Lola and Ariza's wedding procession, bound for Hermosillo, is structurally ideal for it comes almost exactly half-way through the novel.

In the second half of the novel, the main body of the narrative, after Lola's initial reaction of horror and repulsion, is taken up by her eventual integration into Seri life: achieving respect for her powers of healing, growing to love Coyote, and

becoming established as his queen. Matters relating to Guaymas are briefly dealt with in two separate chapters, both successfully integrated into events amongst the Seris.

The prepenultimate chapter is the second of these: a visit to Guaymas by Lola, Coyote, and their followers for the purpose of establishing trade relations. Through what Lola discovers on this visit, various loose ends relating to the people of Guaymas are tied up and any allegiance on Lola's part to Guaymas and her old life is ended. The chapter ends with a moment which would have been artistically ideal for the close of the novel as Lola tosses flowers a little girl had given her from her former garden into the graveyard where her father lies buried and hurries after the band of Seris: "no vuelve la cara para ver cómo Guaymas se va quedando, se va alejando, se va perdiendo . . . perdiendo para siempre" (p.256).

Of all the early indigenista novels, Cajeme -- not surprisingly the most recent -- offers the most possibilities for future development. Perhaps the most striking of these at first sight is the brevity of Chávez Camacho's expression, a welcome feature which re-emerges with Ricardo Pozas's Juan Pérez Jolote (1948). Referring to Chávez Camacho's short paragraphs (usually of one to four lines) Manuel Pedro González aptly comments that he has taken Azuela's style to the ultimate.³⁴ In itself this is perhaps not remarkable but it is quite revolutionary used in the description of Indian customs.

In the chapter, "La Virgen del Camino", where many other

34. Trayectoria de la novela en México (Mexico, 1951), p.325.

authors would have produced a long and exhaustive account of the fiesta, Chávez Camacho is highly economical yet still includes the essentials. He paints the scene in short strokes:

Día de fiesta.

• • •

Curiosa mezcla de cristianismo y paganía.

Hombres y mujeres con sus prendas mejores, oliendo a limpio. (p.215)

Even a description of the danza del venado, so typically Yaqui, is given in these clear-cut sentences, the shortest of paragraphs adding to the limpid impression:

Ahora es el baile del venado.

¡Qué bien imita los movimientos del animal acosado!

La danza es más viva y más ágil, en consonancia con la mayor viveza y agilidad del venado.

Tapa la cara una máscara sin barbas, y sujeta a la cabeza va otra cabeza, como disecada, de un venado, con sus grandes astas.

Y en la mano, la sonaja, acompasada con el acompañamiento de los instrumentos musicales.

A su ritmo, el hombre-venado se estremece, cimbrando el cuerpo, moviendo los brazos y agitándose por entero.

Cuando la máscara no está en su lugar, cambia gestos y visajes con los espectadores. (p.218)

Details of Seri life, too, are given in the briefest, most matter-of-fact manner, thus avoiding the picturesque costumbrista description of earlier novelists: "Lanzando aullidos lloró con las mujeres a los seris muertos, de noche, porque de día a los hombres correspondía llorarlos" (p.209). Aspects of Seri life are often incorporated into a sentence which apparently concentrates on something else: "Ya no le parecían miserables [a Lola] las chozas de hojarasca, zacate y rama, sostenidas por cañas" (p.208). The brevity of expression here diminishes the potential barrier between the reader and the Indian, as, indeed, does the eventual reference to the Indians as Lola's own people: "Ella pudo liberarse, huyendo, y volver así al seno de los suyos" (p.210).

Such brevity of style also enables Chávez Camacho to avoid the Romantic idealization typical of El indio or Lola Casanova. In the chapter which tells the tale of Lola, the Seri chief is simply described as "un indio fuerte y semidesnudo" (p.201). The author evades the potential flowery invitation to Lola to be the queen of the Seris by cutting short Coyote-Iguana's speech to her after a few lines with: "Siguió hablando con entusiasmo, con pasión. De ella, de su reino, de su corazón" (p.202).

As regards the central figure of the novel, Cajeme, we again find that Chávez Camacho avoids idealization. Initially, Cajeme is granted the simple brief description of "un gran hombre" (p.18). As the great legendary and symbolic figure he later becomes, Cajeme clearly tends to represent the good qualities of his people: "Dos de las más esenciales características de su raza, en él se encarnaban: el vigor físico y la gran energía moral" (p.241). However, we are dealing here with something deeper than the simple kind of physical eulogy practised by López y Fuentes in El indio for all that is finally left of Cajeme is "puro espíritu" (p.242). Like Gúiraldes's Don Segundo Sombra or Zapata at the end of López y Fuentes's Tierra, he is a powerful symbol, more myth than man.

With the other key figure of the novel, el jorobado, Chávez Camacho also avoids physical idealization of the Indian for this character is a social reject, both cross-eyed and hunch-backed. More important, however, than his non-idyllic external appearance is the psychological dimension we find in el jorobado. Through the flashback produced in Chapter 2 by his being strung up by Yaqui rebels we gain not only factual details about his

tribe, the Pimas, but also a genuine inner vision of this deformed figure. We come to appreciate, for example, the way this rejected being reacts to the honour of being chosen to take a message to Cajeme: a sense of power: "¡Qué chiquitos vió desde entonces a todos los pimas!" (p.28), the power of revenge: "la última oportunidad de su raza dependía de él. Y él podía frustrarla" (p.28), but also a sense of duty which in the end prevails. The following chapter gives us a further insight into el jorobado as he reflects on the corpses at the battle of Capetemaya:

Ojos abiertos, muy abiertos.
Y ¡cómo veían!
Si parecía como que al morir, habían visto "algo".
¿Qué sería?
Su última visión de este mundo ¿no sería ya la primera
visión del otro?
Lo que sus ojos captaron en el postrer ejercicio visual
¿fue presencia terrena o la imagen de Dios? (p.43)

Unfortunately, as we have already noted, el jorobado's importance dwindles after the first few chapters. Nonetheless, his early presentation does offer clear possibilities for the development of a psychological penetration of the Indian.

Another valuable breakthrough which we find in Cajeme is the author's concern with universal human aspects rather than particularly Indian ones, thus leading him away from the outside view typical of costumbrismo. We find this universalist appeal particularly in the chapters, "Teoría del bosque y la llanura" and "Alucinaciones". The former evokes the suffering of thirst in the desert in a way that can be taken on a personal, tribal, or universal level, as is emphasized in the discovery of water: "Agua a montones para saciar no sólo mi sed, sino toda la sed del Yaqui, toda la sed del mundo" (p.121).

Clearly, there are many positive elements in Cajeme despite its unsatisfactory piecemeal quality. In addition to all these contributions there is a further feature, which relates also to the disjointed structure: Cajeme contains several chapters that would, either on their own or as part of a collection, have made excellent short stories.

In fact, of the seven novels which offer promising possibilities for future development, five seem to indicate that a shorter narrative form than the novel might be more suited to the indigenista genre. This is, perhaps, to be expected, for surely it is easier for the indigenista writer, faced as he is with a content to which he is in many ways alien, to maintain his approach for a shorter period.

The two exceptions, El resplandor and Lola Casanova, are significant. El resplandor is, as we have already noted, one of the least indigenista of these early novels. The author, therefore, is less troubled by the problem of constantly dealing in material to which he is a virtual outsider. The lesson of Lola Casanova is rather different. Primarily a cuentista, Rojas González was acutely aware of the problems posed by creating a longer, structured narrative. Indeed, he remarked on this difficulty to José Mancisidor: "El propio Rojas González me confesaba lo mucho que padecía en sus intentos para escribir una novela: 'La comienzo . . . y de pronto me resulta un cuento'".³⁵ It is, no doubt, the awareness of the problem which faced him in

35. José Mancisidor, "Francisco Rojas González", supplement to El Nacional, 30 December 1951, p.1, cited by Sommers, Francisco Rojas González, p.113.

writing a novel the length of Lola Casanova that brought Rojas González to produce a work that, until the penultimate chapter, does have a planned and balanced structure and consequently an overall coherence.

As for the other five novels, the difficulty of producing a full-length novel is plain to see. The most successful part of El indio — a section which stands fairly well on its own — is the allegorical piece which comprises the first four chapters: a mere 25 pages, a bare 10,000 words. López y Fuentes's Los peregrinos inmóviles again suggests the difficulty of writing a long indigenista work. It is only the second of its three parts that is genuinely indigenista and it spans less than half the novel's length: only 130 scant pages with approximately 30,000 words. The content of Lira's Donde crecen los tepozanes, a novel we have already seen to contain a fair quantity of largely non-functional material, has been regarded by more than one critic as being more suited to presentation as a cuento.³⁶

In several of these early novels, we also find numerous short pieces within each novel which might have stood better on their own. The cuadros de costumbres in El indio are a case in point, perhaps more suited to the short form López y Fuentes was accustomed to producing for newspaper publication. It is in Nayar and Cajeme, however, that we find the most striking potential cuentos.

36. For example, José Luis Martínez, "Crónica de la novela: siete novelas mexicanas de hoy", Cuadernos Americanos, Year VI, 34, no.4 (July-August 1947), 267-75 (p.269) and Rodríguez Chicharro, "La novela indigenista mexicana", p.155.

In Nayar we might pick out Chapter 20, involving the Huichol hechicero, or the tale of Lozada, or perhaps Chapter 25, one of three chapters on the theme of justice. However, the most memorable piece that might stand as a cuento is Chapter 29, either alone or preceded by Chapter 28.

This unit concerns the death of one of the Cora síndicos, or wise old leaders. If we dispense with a couple of paragraphs (Chapter 28, pp.121-22) telling of the ritual involved in appointing a new síndico, we then have a brief introduction to the question of death in general, justifying its existence as do some mythical tales. Following this is the particular death of the old man in question, a section implying the universal pain of existence: "Uno de los síndicos cerró los ojos. Los tenía cansados de ver el dolor de los suyos" (p.119). "Se le cubre con la burda frazada de lana que él mismo tejió, que le sirvió de sudario toda su vida y que le servirá toda su muerte" (p.120).

In the following description of custom and ritual, Menéndez exerts praiseworthy restraint. The sense of grief is effectively put over through a description of the music: "Música indescriptible, de agudos chillidos, que penetran hasta los huesos. Como si todos los huérfanos del mundo lloraran al mismo tiempo y en el mismo lugar" (p.120). His rendering of the typical practice of burying the dead with all their personal effects and food for the journey to the Other World is brief and free of explanatory comments.

After this first chapter, describing the síndico's death and burial, the second deals with his apparition after death. The possible explanations for this apparition are perhaps less successful but the piece dealing with the apparition itself is

probably the most dramatic part of the whole novel and worthy of the best Mexican short story writers today.

The idea of the spread and growth of a rumour is effectively given in the progression from the opening words, "Dicen que de su tumba se levantó el síndico" (p.123), which in the second paragraph is augmented to "Los mil ojos de la superstición le ven" (p.123), becoming finally a penetrating fear, capable of seeing the ghost: "el miedo que acredita en la sombra los perfiles de su sombra" (pp.123-24). As the belief becomes stronger, so the figure becomes more definite, the vague "dicen que de su tumba se levantó" graduating to an actual description of this moment: " . . . abrir la tierra, asomar los ojos . . . sacar sus brazos, sacar su cuerpo . . . " (p.123). The sense of his presence — "¡Anda por aquí! . . . ¡Ronda entre la noche!" (p.123) — progresses to more concrete action on the part of the ghost: "escabullirse, hurtando encuentros familiares" (p.123). The climax comes in the onlooker's sympathy:

-¡Míralo! . . . ¡Ahí va! . . . ¿Ves? . . . Ahora se detiene y se inclina . . . Atisba por las junturas de los débiles troncos que sirven de alma al rojo barro de los muros de su choza . . . ¡Sufre! . . . ¡Se ve que sufre! . . . ¿Oyes? . . . Lloro . . . ¡Óyelo! . . . ¡Míralo! . . . Ahí está, en cuclillas, llorando . . . (p.124)

While in Nagar we might mention the tale of Lozada as a possible cuento, with all the benefits of its presentation of the indigenous tendency to mythicize, the evocation of thirst in the desert in Cajeme ("Teoría del bosque y la llanura") is another highly effective piece as is also Chapter 2 where in flashback we witness el jorobado's whole life passing before his eyes. Perhaps the most significant potential cuento in Cajeme is "El gran amor de

Coyote-Iguana", for it produces a highly successful cuento out of the same story used by Rojas González for a full-scale novel. The novel, Lola Casanova, has its merits as a structured and balanced narrative until nearing the end but there is also much we find fault with. The quintessential version produced by Chávez Camacho, however, captures the story of Lola without these less desirable aspects.

In conclusion, then, we find a number of possibilities offered by the pioneer group of indigenistas: there are various valuable attempts to produce an inside view of the Indian, including also interiorization and a possible psychological dimension; an allegorical approach can prove fruitful as can the use of mythopoeic language; brevity of expression is a welcome step forward and, while there is clearly scope for producing a well-structured full-length novel, it is also evident that the cuento may prove a particularly apt vehicle for indigenista concerns.

CHAPTER II

THE SHORT STORY ALTERNATIVE

As we have seen in Chapter I, the experience of the Mexican indigenista novel in the 30s and 40s suggests that, for various reasons, the short story might be a more suitable vehicle for subsequent indigenista writing. Certainly, in Peru in the 1920s the cuento had been very much the choice for indigenista and regionalist content. No doubt this was partly because of publication difficulties with the novel: a short story could be published cheaply and easily in a magazine. Nonetheless, there is no denying that the cuento was a tried and tested form, boasting some success, in the Peruvian indigenista field. Clearly, it was a form that held promise for the Mexican writers of the 50s and early 60s.

The cuento, based usually on a single incident or theme, perhaps offers an easier road to artistic coherence than the novel. Its very brevity and simplicity — being without digressions or secondary characters — forestalls the need for the various kinds of "padding" often found in the early indigenista novel in Mexico. In addition, the scope of the cuento does not demand the deeper and more sustained kind of character creation that we find lacking in the novels of the 30s and 40s. Of course, there are other stumbling blocks that are less likely to be overcome merely by the more condensed form of the cuento: ideological

intrusions, idealization and exoticism, and a lack of universality, amongst others. In the short stories to be examined, however, we hope to reveal progress in these areas too, which parallels the progress made also by the later novelists. We shall, therefore, pay attention both to achievements which can be attributed directly to the short story form and also to advances of a more general nature.

We shall examine four collections of short stories:

El diosero (1952) by Francisco Rojas González, Benzulul (1959) by Eraclio Zepeda and Ciudad Real (1960) by Rosario Castellanos, both set in Chiapas, and Cuentos del desierto (1959) by Emma Dolujanoff. Also included in this chapter is María Lombardo de Caso's La culebra tapó el río (1962), a fairly long short story published on its own.

FRANCISCO ROJAS GONZÁLEZ: EL DIOSERO

Reprinted every three or four years in runs of often 20,000 copies, El diosero¹ identifies Rojas González as one of Mexico's most acclaimed short story writers and one with various positive contributions to make to the cuento as a vehicle for indigenista writing. In his stories we find a functional presentation of indigenous custom, insight into and sympathy with the Indian outlook, a solution to the question of character creation, a certain universality, only infrequent didacticism, and the introduction of humour.

1. (Mexico: FCE, 1960). All subsequent references are to this edition.

Since Rojas González was an ethnologist, it is not surprising that typical indigenous customs are portrayed in many of his stories. However, rather than constituting extra and often extraneous information — often the case with such material in the early novels, including the author's own Lola Casanova — such customs and beliefs frequently form the nucleus of the story. As Joseph Sommers commented on El diosero: "otra técnica sobresaliente . . . es el empleo del folklore, entrelazado integralmente con la trama".²

The second story of the collection, "Los novios", may be very much a cuadro de costumbres but, unlike those in El indio, it does not pretend to be anything else. It is not disguised as part and parcel of a novel but simply presented for what it is: a sketch. For this reason, "Los novios" is in a completely different league from the typical marriage scene described in Guelaguetza. Besides, the story here does not come over merely as describing fascinating typical customs witnessed by an outsider for, not only is the author conscious of "la etiqueta indígena", the figure of the mother seems to be too: "La vieja Bibliana Petra está rebotante de gusto: el primer acto ha salido a maravillas" (p.21).

While in "Los novios" Rojas González consciously creates a cuadro de costumbres, more frequently he uses a point of indigenous custom or belief as either the axis or the final twist of his stories, the latter being very characteristic of his cuentos.

2. "Rojas González, cuentista", supplement to Ovaciones, 5 June 1966, p.2.

In "La tona", the first story of the collection, the belief in the tona, or guardian spirit, of the title gives rise to the amusing ending. After a difficult birth, tended by a sympathetic mestizo doctor, the child's tona is ascertained by sprinkling a ring of ash round the house. Whichever animal leaves its tracks will be the child's tona. Since the doctor, going home on his bicycle, crosses the ash, the child is christened *Damián Bicicleta*.

Similarly, in "La triste historia del pascola Cenobio" the final twist exemplifies the traditional justice of the Yaqui Indians. Having killed a man, Cenobio Tánori, despite his great popularity, must be killed and "nadie podrá conmutar la sentencia de muerte que se prepara, excepto Marciala Morales, la rencorosa y horrible viuda de Miguel Tojíncola y de quien nada podría esperarse dado su agresivo comportamiento . . . " (p.128). Willing to die, Cenobio is unexpectedly "saved" by the intervention of the widow, who claims him as replacement bedfellow and provider for her numerous family.

Huichol Indian belief in a power by the name of Hículi Hualula forms the basis of the story of that title while "El diosero", too, is centred on religious faith, this time among the Lacandón Indians: when the old gods become apparently ineffective, Kai-Lan, el diosero, moulds new ones to give protection from the elements.

In these last two stories, in addition to finding out about a belief or tradition, we are also given an insight into the Indian magico-religious world-view. The indigenous attitude to life is again exemplified in the worship of the picture of the Mona Lisa in "Nuestra Señora de Nequetejé" while in "El cezontle

y la vereda" we appreciate the magico-religious outlook of a Chinanteco family, suffering from malaria, who have been helped by quinine tablets: not by eating them but by wearing them as necklaces after the apparent ritual of being weighed and measured by the research team.

Rojas González does not in any way denigrate the Indians for their different beliefs, nor suggest that their outlook is invalid. Often enough, rather, he ridicules the non-Indian outsider. We see this in "Nuestra Señora de Nequetejé" where the rational conclusion of the psychoanalyst completely fails to take into account a religious response to the Mona Lisa reproduction. The theoretical, scientific approach is ridiculed again in "El cezontle y la vereda", even in the language: "Había que basar en datos irrefutables de tipo estadístico una teoría . . . " (p.45). A more concrete criticism of the cold, theoretical approach comes in this story with the research group's attitude to the family with malaria, regarding them merely as "test cases".

In "El cezontle y la vereda", the major outsider who is ridiculed, despite considering himself the best acquainted with the scene, is the first-person outsider, an alter ego of the author. Such ridicule of the outsider, even when it is the author's alter ego, comes to a climax in "Hículi Hualula" where the interfering ethnologist who is the first-person narrator gets his just deserts: he is taken into the Cruz Roja suffering from fearful visions because he has dared to utter the name of Hículi Hualula and pry into his secret identity.

By satirizing the non-Indian outsider, Rojas González turns to his advantage the problem of the "outside view" of the Indian.

His stories poke fun at the non-Indian or at the situations which arise from the gulf between Indian and non-Indian. However, they also evoke in the reader a sympathy with the Indian world-view. Thus the reader tends to feel that he is closer to the Indian than are these outsiders in the story. In "Nuestra Señora de Nequetejé", for example, we are admittedly no closer to the Indian than the narrator but we are certainly closer than the detached, scientific psychoanalyst whose tests purport to reveal, "ante propios y extraños el alma de los indios de México" (p.80).

In the case of "El cezontle y la vereda", where the Indians conclude that the aeroplane is a great bird of prey which the strangers plan to feed on Indians, while we are rationally aware of the error in their interpretation we cannot help but sympathize with it for they have been told that, "En él viajan hombres iguales que ustedes y que nosotros" (p.47) and that the plane "lleva en su vientre la esencia de la lumbre: la gasolina, el aceite, las grasas . . . " (p.48).

Occasionally we feel that Rojas González is over-sentimental in his bid to establish our sympathy. We see this in "Las vacas de Quiviquinta", where the baby is eventually deprived of her mother's plentiful milk: "la niña que gime huérfana de sus dos cantaritos de barro moreno" (p.31). However, the sentimentality is offset by the irony that it is the very inhuman treatment of the Indian by the forasteros that enables the starving Indian to benefit in the end: "-Si don Remigio, 'el barbón' tiene sus vacas d'ionde sacar el avío pal'año que'ntra, tú, Esteban, también tienes la tuya . . . y más rendidora. Sembraremos l'año que'ntra toda la parcela, porque yo conseguiré l'avío" (p.31).

The problem of deficient Indian character creation in the indigenista novel is solved for Rojas González by the cuento for, like so many short story writers, he captures his protagonists at a moment of crisis which is the axis of the plot. Simón in "La tona" is caught at the difficult moment of his wife's problematic labour; Kai-lan, el diosero, is seen creating new gods in a bid to calm the storm and save his crops; Martina and Esteban in "Las vacas de Quiviquinta", portrayed at a time of famine, are presented with a drastic solution: she takes paid employment as a wet-nurse while he is left to feed the baby as best he can. There is no need for the deeper sort of character creation: the moment of crisis is sufficient.

In addition, though the details may be local, we find that these moments of crisis tend to be in essence fairly universal. As Joseph Sommers comments, Rojas González uses "temas que trascienden lo regional".³ This universality helps to break down the barrier between Indian and outsider. We deal with a difficult birth in "La tona"; the desperate measures dictated by near starvation in "Las vacas de Quiviquinta"; various facets of religion in "El diosero", "Nuestra Señora de Nequetejé" and "Hículi Hualula"; crime and revenge in "La triste historia del pascola Cenobio", and illness in part of "El cezontle y la vereda".

Universal appeal is therefore often provided by the essence of the story, Indian typicality comes over in the details. Personal focus is ensured by the use of just a few central figures.

3. "La génesis literaria en Francisco Rojas González", Revista Iberoamericana, 29, no.56 (July-December 1963), 299-309 (p.300).

Not all of these are Indian but, where they are, their individuality is usually established early on while information about which Indian tribe they belong to is slipped in unobtrusively later. For example, in "Las vacas de Quiviquinta" the whole story, final twist included, is almost over before the Indian tribe of the protagonists is specified: "-Estas indias coras -acota el hombre- tienen fama de ser muy buenas lecheras" (p.31). Thus the emphasis is on a universal human problem which is only incidentally Cora Indian.

The condensed vision of the cuento tends to make overt didactic comment redundant. Occasionally, Rojas González has felt obliged to add an authorial remark. This happens in "El cezontle y la vereda" where he includes a didactic last paragraph commenting on the strong words spoken against "aquellos hombres y aquellos sistemas que al aherrojar los puños y engrillar las piernas, chafan los cerebros, mellan los entendimientos y anulan las voluntades con más coraje, con más saña que el paludismo, que la tuberculosis, que la enterocolitis, que la onchocerosis . . . " (p.53). On the whole, however, he lets the moment of crisis speak for itself. Disregard for the Indian as a human being is evident in the forasteros' attitude to Esteban and Martina in "Las vacas de Quiviquinta" and again earlier on in "El cezontle y la vereda" without being pointed out by authorial comment. Similarly, the doctor's generous attitude to Simón and his wife in "La tona" reveals itself as appropriate to the birth of a healthy son to a healthy mother and a bond established between Indian family and doctor when the latter agrees to be the baby's godfather. No didactic comment is necessary.

The often piecemeal appearance of the early indigenista novel can also be averted by the use of the cuento. There is no need to gather together disparate material in an attempt to create a full-length novel. Rather, each idea, theme, or anecdote can be taken for a separate story or combined with just one or two more. "La tona" takes a difficult birth eventually tended by a non-Indian doctor combined with the belief in and discovery of the child's tona; "El diosero" takes Kai-lan's god-making in conjunction with a stormy night and the detail that his three wives take it in turns to sleep with him; "La triste historia del pascola Cenobio" takes a young man's sacrifice to earn money for his wife-to-be, which alienates him from the tribe, and plays it off against the Yaqui system of justice; "Las vacas de Quiviquinta" has the theme of hunger along with one couple's desperate solution; "Hículi Hualula" takes the belief in the power of el tío and its effect on the narrator.

One story, "El cezontle y la vereda" suffers from lack of unity because it has not taken the cuento approach far enough. The tale of the research team, the aeroplane, and the Indians' interpretation of the purpose of the research is unsatisfactorily linked to the story of the family with malaria by the closing didactic piece mentioned above when, really, the two matters might have been better dealt with as separate cuentos.

In one aspect in particular, however, the cuentos of El diosero are virtually unique within Mexican indigenista literature: they incorporate humour. The final twist typical of the end of so many short stories, of course, offers an ideal opportunity for humour. It may be a rather wry laugh, as for

example in the case of Cenobio Tánori, "saved" from death by the old widow. There are also, however, genuinely amusing moments. We have one of these in the adoption of the Mona Lisa as Nuestra Señora de Nequetejé; also the ironic fate of the narrator in "Hículi Hualula", obsessed by the secret power he had longed to find out about; and, of course, the humorous outcome of "La tona" where the baby is named Damián Bicicleta. Rojas González is not poking fun at the Indian, nor is he any less committed because of his humour. He is merely perceiving the amusing incidents that can arise, primarily from the interplay of different world-views. The memorable humour of some of his stories is, in fact, a refreshing and very effective means of capturing the rift between Indian and non-Indian.

ERACLIO ZEPEDA: BENZULUL

Out of the eight stories in Benzulul,⁴ four clearly deal with Indian figures: "Benzulul"; "Viento"; "¿Quien dice verdad"; and "Patrocinio Tipá". These are alternated in the collection with cuentos concerning other people of Chiapas, usually country folk or soldiers. Thus the collection gives us an overall impression of regional Chiapas where the Indian is a part of the scene.

Like Rojas González, Zepeda makes traditional customs and beliefs an integral part of his stories by using them as the axis of the narration. "Benzulul" is built around the belief in the

4. (Xalapa, Mexico: Universidad Veracruzana, 1959). All subsequent references are to this edition.

powers of the chulel, or kindred spirit, after which the person is named (the same concept as in Rojas González's "La tona"). "Viento" is centred on Matías's conviction both that, having the nauyaca snake as his nagual (similar to chulel, but more powerful) he is capable of calling on the wind -- another snake, in his conception -- to change direction and also that he cannot be killed by the snake which comes into his hut unless it is a moonlit night. The traditional conviction that the truth is pure is the basis of "Quien dice verdad" while the burial of the umbilical cord to establish a child's roots is central to "Patrocinio Tipá". In all these stories it is the old people who are the source of such custom and belief, thus emphasizing that these are part of the indigenous traditional heritage.

By dramatizing an event associated with each belief, Zepeda's stories are not only concerned to convey to the reader the existence of the belief involved. Through participating in the events of the story the reader is drawn to believe too, if only for the duration of the story. The fascination of indigenous beliefs apart, each story thus becomes an engrossing concern, a drama in which we become involved.

The moment of crisis each of the four stories is built upon is thoroughly bound up with the central belief in each. "Benzulul", having revealed the protagonist's belief in the chulel, his timidity, and his envy of Encarnación Salvatierra, goes on to tell of Benzulul's sad attempt to assume Encarnación Salvatierra's name and power. In "Viento" we see Matías's old age, failure, and death through the belief in the nagual. The moment of crisis in "Quien dice verdad" is that of Sebastián's imminent arrest for

murder (not unprovoked) and he is both arrested and killed precisely because of his conviction that telling the truth will maintain his purity. "Patrocinio Tipá" covers a longer span than the other stories but it is essentially concerned with one time of crisis, taken in relation to the belief about the umbilical cord: the fateful years when Patrocinio deviated from the wanderer's way of life dictated for him by his father's failure to bury his umbilical cord.

While the traditional beliefs that the stories are built around — the chulel, the nagual, the burial of the umbilical cord — are largely local (the conviction about the truth is perhaps more universal), the central moment which dramatizes them deals with universal concepts and sentiments. Benzulul is timid and suffers an inferiority complex, Matías is unwilling to recognize the failure of old age and his imminent death, Sebastián is convinced of the validity of the truth and refuses to adapt to the corrupt conduct his adversaries adopt, and Patrocinio Tipá looks back on a life that seems to have been stricken with bad luck and perceives omens that should have warned him. A further universal theme that pervades the whole collection and has been remarked upon by numerous critics as a unifying factor is that of death.

With death as a leitmotif, it is hardly surprising that the cuentos of Benzulul, unlike those of El diosero, involve no humour, not even an ironic humour. There is, however, irony of a non-humorous nature, often deriving from the final twist, which gives these stories lasting impact: it is Benzulul's attempt to be an assertive, feared personality like Encarnación that eventually

puts him at the mercy of this feared ladino while Sebastián's conviction that the truth is the best solution only leads him to be shot unlawfully by the authorities who are supposedly upholding justice. In these two cuentos, the rift and conflict between Indian and ladino has provoked only tragedy. There are none of the more lighthearted outcomes that we find with Rojas González.

It is perhaps in the unmitigated tragedy of the conflict between Indian and ladino that Zepeda is making his implicit critical comment on the situation. Rosario Castellanos, surprisingly enough, fails to perceive this and suggests that Zepeda is not committed enough, asserting, "no ha logrado acentuar con suficiente energía, los obstáculos contra los que se debaten [sus criaturas]: la miseria, la ignorancia y el odio racial".⁵ Castellanos herself, in fact, as we shall later see, demonstrates too overt a commitment in some of her short stories in Ciudad Real (though this tendency is absent from her two indigenista novels) and we cannot agree with this assessment she makes of Benzulul. On the contrary, it is the very lack of overt commitment, the lack of the author's imposed ideological concerns, that guarantees the appeal of the cuentos of Benzulul, both as literary art and as a comment on life. Nowhere does Zepeda idealize his Indians nor paint an over-sentimental picture to compromise our sympathies. For example, Patrocinio Tipá's child's death provoked deep emotion in him but, recounted as it is in retrospect, the effect is not overdone. We perceive poverty and the risk of starvation in passing in "Viento" but without its being over-emphasized. The

5. "Benzulul", México en la Cultura, 28 February 1960, p.4.

suffering of the Indian at the hands of the ladino is made evident, as we can see in "Benzulul" and "Quien dice verdad" but, in each case, some blame lies with the Indian in question, thus avoiding a stereotyped evocation.

Zepeda's success does not only lie in his avoidance of many of the pitfalls encountered by the early indigenista novelists but more especially in the positive contribution he has to make to the genre. Rojas González, as Joseph Sommers has remarked, was very much a traditional narrator in the realist tradition, offering no technical innovations.⁶ Eraclio Zepeda, in Benzulul, is much more adventurous in narrative techniques, and to good effect, often integrating different narrative voices in the one story.

In "Quien dice verdad" he uses two separate narrative voices. (A similar technique is used in "El mudo", one of the non-indigenista cuentos in the collection.) Here one voice covers immediate events, including considerable dialogue: brief information about Sebastián is given then conversation is used to assert his murder of the ladino, his being urged to flee, his refusal to do so, and finally his arrest and death at the hands of the police. In fact, this narrative line is almost entirely dialogue, with only occasional description interspersed, often to comment on the approach of the authorities. This unusual blend makes for a highly tense and dramatic effect:

-Agarrá camino, Sebastián.
-Juyíte. Vos no tenés pecado.
-Jué el Lorenzo el que se lo buscó.
-Yo juí. No me voy. No me juigo.

6. "Rojas González, cuentista mexicano", supplement to Ovaciones, 14 January 1962, p.4.

Los caballos de los policías bajaron al llano. Se abrieron en una larga línea que abarcaba el pequeño valle.
-Todavía podés, Sebastián. Juyíte.
-Tenés mujer. Juyíte.
-Si te agarran te amuelan, Sebastián.
-Tenés hijos, Sebastián. Juyíte.
-No puedo. Estoy debiendo. No es bueno jugar al castigo. (p.111)

The other narrative voice, distinguished by being in italics, covers the background to the situation. It introduces Tata Juan's memorable words about the value of the truth and tells of the friction between Sebastián and the ladino Lorenzo Castillo, arising from the latter's insults when Sebastián had treated him generously. Some dialogue between the two men is expressed but on the whole this narrative line is a more tranquil informative voice, establishing events of the past, in contrast with the urgent dialogue of the present.

There is no problem of lack of unity. Both narrative voices relate to the murder and they are alternated referring to the same details. By dint of this narrative technique Zepeda achieves a more all-embracing account than otherwise possible in the reduced space of the cuento yet never loses the unity of the story as Rojas González risks doing when he incorporates disparate elements.

Frequently, the different narrative voices used by Zepeda involve a third-person narrative alternated with a first-person narrator. Whereas any of Rojas González's first-person narrators in El diosero were "outsiders", alter egos of the author as ethnologist, "Benzulul" and "Patrocinio Tipá" incorporate a first-person narrator who is Indian. This technique clearly offers an excellent opportunity of apparently capturing an inside view of the Indian. No doubt for this reason Reyes Nevares felt that

Zepeda "Nunca da la impresión de establecer entre ellos [sus tipos] y él esa distancia que suele apreciarse en las obras de esta clase; distancia de investigador a objeto de su estudio".⁷

Furthermore, the third-person narrative used in conjunction is usually closer to the protagonist than that achieved by other authors we have examined.

The third-person narrator of "Benzulul" is close to our protagonist and is a voice well acquainted with the region too. In fact, we suspect, from the opening paragraph, that it is an Indian voice, though not that of our protagonist:

Mientras avanzaba por la vereda, una parte de su cuerpo se iba quedando en las marcas de sus huellas. Podría haberse quedado ciego de pronto (por una brujería de la nana Porfiria, o por un mal aire, o por el vuelo maligno de una mariposa negra), y a pesar de ello, seguir el camino hasta el pueblo sin extraviarse. No había una hiedra que no conociera; ni el pino quemado y roto por la piedra del rayo, ni el nido de la nauyaca, habían escapado al encuentro de sus ojos. (p.13)

While this third-person narrator brings us fairly close to the Indian protagonist, the first-person narration (in italics) integrated into the other takes us right inside the mind of Benzulul, revealing his memories, his ponderings and his preoccupations: in a word, his outlook on life. Thus we learn of his concern with the matter which forms the thematic basis of the cuento:

La nana dice que uno es como los duraznos. Tenemos semilla en el centro. Es bueno cuidar la semilla. Por eso tenemos algodón y carne y huesos. Pa cuidar la semilla. "Pero lo más mejor pa cuidarla es el nombre", dice. Eso es lo más mejor. El nombre da juerza. Si tenés un nombre galán, galana es la semilla. Si tenés nombre cualquier

7. Salvador Reyes Nevares, "Eraclio Zepeda: Benzulul", México en la Cultura, 31 January 1960, p.4.

cosa, tás fregado. Y eso es lo que más me amuela. Benzulul no sirve pa guardar semilla. (p.15)

Similarly, in "Patrocinio Tipá", the third-person narrator is from the village where most of the action takes place: "Fue aquí en Juan Crispín" (p.134). He is close to the protagonist, belongs to the region, and shares the world-view which we come to see also in Patrocinio, regarding the "rayo en seco" as an ill omen. The first-person narrative, this time telling the protagonist's story in direct speech rather than emerging as an inner voice, takes us directly into the outlook of Patrocinio:

-Ya es de nacimiento el andar de andariego. Así es mi natural y ni modo. Fue culpa de mi tata si bien se analiza. Cuando nací, el viejito no se dio prisa pa enterrar mi ombligo que es como debe hacerse . . . vino una urraca y se llevó mi ombligo pa más nunca. (p.134)

We are given his own frank account of his emotions too: "-Yo, palabra, lloré sobre mi hijito. Ni vergüenza me da contarlo. Se me murió en los brazos, porque yo lo cargaba pa que también a yo [sic] me pegara la fiebre" (p.138).

In "Viento" we come close to this alternation of narrative voices, one a first-person narrator-protagonist. To start with, the story is told by a third-person narrative voice with Matías's calling to the wind occasionally inserted: "Vientooo . . . Vientooo . . . ". As the story proceeds, however, Matías's interventions increase in length and frequency, expressing directly his emotions and his beliefs:

-El viento nace de la boca de la nana culebra. De allí es que nace. Ésa es su mera casa: la boca de la nana culebra. Ella está allá por el camino de Santa Fe. Ése es su nido. Desde allá sopla cuando se lo digo. Quien sabe qué es que le pasa ahora que no quiere hacer caso de su hijo Matías. (p.66)

Thus this story, too, gains from a first-person narrative voice

to give a direct insight into the protagonist and his world-view.

In addition to the technical advance of the blend of two narrative voices, we note Zepeda's immense care in constructing his cuentos. An examination of the title story, "Benzulul", in which the Indian protagonist is strung up by the ladino, Encarnación Salvatierra, his tongue cut out for having "stolen" the ladino's name, reveals Zepeda's skill. We find a progressive exposé of the central predicament, building up to a major articulation, a calculated introduction of prefiguring devices anticipating the outcome, control of the atmosphere, and effective use of irony.

The first page (p.13) and the opening of the paragraph at the top of the following page introduce the protagonist, Benzulul, and his magical world-view. A slightly ominous tone is set in the first paragraph by the mention of possible hazards: brujería; mal aire; mariposa negra; rayo; nauyaca. It is then established that Benzulul's knowledge of the area hangs on "events": sucesos, ocurrencias, that the area has been witness to: a gentle suggestion that the story will tell of another such event. Finally, the sameness of Benzulul's everyday routine is emphasized in order to highlight the events to come: "La misma caminata. Siempre el mismo rumbo . . . " (p.14).

This same paragraph, with its repetitive opening, specifies a detail of Benzulul's route which acts as the first major foreshadowing device: "En este árbol colgaron al Martín Tzotzoc" (p.14). The detail introduces our antagonist, too, for it was Encarnación Salvatierra who hanged Martín for having spoken up about the Salvatierra brothers' theft of a fine bull. We are reminded briefly of this foreshadowing device of Martín's death by his

mention on six subsequent occasions (pp. 16, 17, 17, 18, 21 & 23) before the major articulation of the story with Benzulul's attempt to assume Encarnación Salvatierra's identity.

Not only is the action of the outcome anticipated by the first mention of Martín's hanging: there is also a prefiguring of its context in that Martín said too much. Apart from assuming Encarnación Salvatierra's name, Benzulul's main error was precisely this: "Todo lo dijo el Benzulul" (p.30). Indeed, it had been Martín's death which had inspired Benzulul's habitual reserve: "Yo desde ese ínter, me hice la obligación de no decir nada" (p.14). The value of such a stance is reiterated on page 15 by reference to the river and Nana Porfiria who, likewise, keep their secrets.

Mention of Nana Porfiria leads us on in the protagonist's first-person meditations to the central question of the story: the power of one's name — and implicitly one's chulel or guardian spirit — to protect a person, a power which Benzulul has little of: "Y eso es lo que más me amuela. Benzulul no sirve pa guardar semilla" (p.15). The concept of lack of strength in this respect is developed on the following page (p.16) by reference to Benzulul's father and mother and to Martín, all dead now because of lack of strength in their names. The threat to Benzulul himself is also underlined: "Algún día yo también voy a quedar con el centro hecho mierda" (p.16) and the outcome of the story is further anticipated by a specific comment: "tal vez . . . me dejan colgado como al Martín" (p.17).

Linked to this last comment — indeed, preceding it in the same paragraph — we have the first concrete assertion of Encarnación Salvatierra as Benzulul's antagonist (the first

mention, in relation to Martín, was purely suggestive): "si yo dijera: AQUÍ TÁ ENCARNACIÓN SALVATIERRA, todos me vendrían a saludar Pero si digo: AQUÍ TÁ JUAN RODRÍGUEZ BENZULUL, la cosa se empieza a descomponer" (p.17). This moment acts as a preliminary articulation, establishing the central conflict between Benzulul and Encarnación Salvatierra. The crystallization of this conflict is perhaps suggested by the opening words of the next paragraph: "De un salto se puso en pie" (p.17) while the change of light and the approach of night evoked in the accompanying description prepares the reader for something to happen.

Between this point and the major articulation of Benzulul's assumption of Encarnación Salvatierra's name there is a contrast asserted between the two. Firstly, Encarnación's fearless brashness comes over, complete with a preliminary contrast to his earlier victim, Martín, in Benzulul's first-person meditations: "Hace maldá y es respetado. Mata gente y nadie lo agarra. Roba muchacha y no lo corretean . . . " (p.17). As for Benzulul, a menacing evocation of shadows and muertos provides an introduction to the manifestation of his fear, within which a brief anticipation of his attempt to come is provided by his eager thought: "¡Si consigo un nombre todo cambia!" (p.21). At this stage, however, despite the reiterated "no temía": "No podía tener miedo de la tierra que conocía sus pasos" (p.21), what we see is Benzulul's fear. He hurries past the graveyard, ignoring a voice (actually Nana Porfiria's) which he presumes to be that of a tormented soul. Conscious of his timidity, he contrasts himself on reaching home with Encarnación: "El Encarnación Salvatierra no hubiera salido jugando Pero yo sí corrí. Yo soy Benzulul. El es

Encarnación Salvatierra" (p.23). His fear is further underlined by his reaction to a knock on the door: the arrival of Nana Porfiria. Her assertion focuses our attention on where the danger really lies for Benzulul: "-Dejá los muertos en paz. Preocúpate de los vivos. Ése es el peligro. Los muertos viven. Los vivos matan" (p.25).

With Benzulul's lamenting to Nana Porfiria his lack of nombre and chulel we come to the major articulation of the cuento. Nana Porfiria opens up the possibility that one can change one's name and chulel: "Te sacás el Benzulul con un poco de sangre. Luego lo metés al otro, el que querás" (p.26). The folkloric details of the ritual are eclipsed by ominous scene-setting which heralds the tragic outcome of this venture: "La luna se perdió en un pinar de nubes. Tenejapa quedó a oscuras. La choza quedó a oscuras. Benzulul cayó en las sombras" (p.27).

Effectively leaving the success of Benzulul's attempt in the balance and continuing the contrast between Benzulul and Encarnación, there follows a two-page interlude where we witness the Salvatierra brothers at first hand in a tavern conversation which reveals all their brute violence and inconsideration. The final detail, concerning Encarnación's lack of desire to have any offspring, anticipates his unfavourable response to anyone's taking his name: "Entre más Salvatierras haya, peor pa nosotros. Como que se debilita la juerza del nombre y aluego no es garantía" (p.29). After this interlude, stark one-line paragraphs evoking the approach of dawn through people's movements leave the reader with a sense of premonition as we are brought back to the question of Benzulul: "La Porfiria abandonó el jacal de Benzulul" (p.29).

Benzulul awakens a new man: "Ése día, Juan Rodríguez Benzulul, amaneció distinto. Tenía alegría. Estaba contento. Se notaba fuerte. Más diablo" (p.30). His behaviour is clearly typical of Encarnación as we have just seen him and is recognized as such by others:

Se encontró con la Lupe y le propuso que se fueran juntos para el monte.

Le habló al Salvador Pérez Bolón y le quitó su dinero. Bebió trago y gritó su fuerza.

. . .

Todos supieron que era el Encarnación Salvatierra. (pp.30-31)

We then witness Benzulul saying too much, asserting his new identity and divulging all his secrets as he had resolved not to do, a moment of error perhaps anticipated by Nana Porfiria's ill-advised revelation to him of how to change one's nombre and chulel. The as yet unknown effect that such behaviour on Benzulul's part will have on the real Encarnación Salvatierra is drawn attention to by the recurrence on the same page of the anticipative sentence: "Tanto lo dijo, tanto lo oyeron, que se lo fueron a contar al otro Encarnación" (p.31). Following the suspense evoked here the unfortunate nature of the outcome is suggested by the following paragraph: "La noche enfrió las piedras de Tenejapa. El camino estuvo triste. Las lomas, los árboles, las encinas y los conejos conocieron otro suceso aquella noche" (p.31).

The outcome itself is briefly covered in another tavern conversation with the Salvatierra brothers: "nomás me lo colgué, pero no pa ahorcarlo, de los brazos lo guindé nomás, pero luego me puse a pensar que a lo mejor seguía con las ganas de perjudicarme la defensa. Saqué el cuchillo y le arranqué la lengua para que no me ande robando el nombre" (p.32). The final irony of the

story is thus revealed. Not only is it Benzulul's attempt to transcend the limitations of his name and be an assertive, feared personality like Encarnación that actually brings his downfall, his rejection of his chosen stance of silence brings Benzulul to an enforced return to his habitual silence, his tongue cut out.

In conclusion, in this and the other three indigenista stories in Zepeda's collection, we enjoy the incorporation of indigenous belief into the story's central concern, we find such local interest projected in universal terms of reference, and we find that didacticism, partially averted in El diosero, is here completely ironed out. In addition, we find that Zepeda introduces significant technical advances, in particular as regards narrative voice, broadening the scope of a brief cuento by using two narrative voices, one of them a first-person narrative which achieves direct insight into his Indian protagonists. Furthermore, all this is found in stories constructed with delicate care in order to achieve their chosen effects.

ROSARIO CASTELLANOS: CIUDAD REAL

Like Zepeda, Rosario Castellanos writes about the people of Chiapas. All of the ten cuentos in Ciudad Real⁸ involve the Indian to a greater or lesser degree, usually involving his relationship to the ladino. The first four stories of the collection, having indigenous protagonists, especially concern

8. 2nd edition (Naucalpan de Juárez, Estado de México: Novaro, 1977). All subsequent references are to this edition.

the Indian. These are: "La muerte del tigre", "La tregua", "Aceite guapo", and "La suerte de Teodoro Méndez Acubal".

In "La muerte del tigre" we have a collective Indian protagonist: the Bolometric tribe. Castellanos achieves here in a cuento what was attempted earlier by López y Fuentes in part of his two indigenista novels: the combination of historical overview with action in the present. The story opens with a narration of the fate of the Bolometric tribe in the past. It is a largely timeless evocation — "Las pasadas grandezas"; "Cuando la llegada de los blancos" (p.13) — the most concrete time reference being "Los siglos de sumisión" (p.15). The overall historical perspective of the tribe being conquered, deprived of land, and forced up into the infertile, inhospitable land of the high mountain plateau then gives way to the moment of crisis which provokes the central present action of the cuento: hunger forces the men of the tribe to go down to Ciudad Real to seek employment in debt peonage. Once the subsequent deal with the enganchador has taken place, told largely in dialogue to dramatize it, the story finally reverts to a more timeless plane as the men of the tribe are stricken by death or disease or are condemned by their debts to spend the rest of their days on the coast.

The overall allegory of this cuento is summed up by the title for the tigre was the tribe's protective spirit, "cuyo nombre fueron dignos de ostentar por su bravura y por su audacia" (p.13), a bravura and audacia which is eventually crushed by the white man. Of all the cuentos in this collection, the timeless, allegorical plane here perhaps most immediately recalls the epigraph to the collection:

¿En qué día? ¿En qué luna? ¿En qué año sucede lo que aquí se cuenta? Como en los sueños, como en las pesadillas, todo es simultáneo, todo está presente, todo existe hoy.

As well as implying a perpetual state of affairs, one of the pleasing effects of the timeless, allegorical approach is that it avoids insistent propagandistic social realism. Rather than crude emphasis of brutal exploitation, here one key example of exploitation, limited to its initial bureaucratic stages, is presented: enganche. However, the relationship of this incident to the overall dimension of the crushing of the tribe's place and identity still implies profound criticism.

The inner commitment of Castellanos to the Indian is evident from the dedication of Ciudad Real: "Al Instituto Nacional Indigenista, que trabaja para que cambien las condiciones de vida de mi pueblo". Judging from the first story, Castellanos is capable of putting over her committed message in a subtle manner. We see this again in "La rueda del hambriento" where, without taking sides, Castellanos exposes the problem of whether to help the Indians at all costs, even as pure charity, or to insist on payment from them for medical treatment, thus ensuring not only that help is valued but also that funds are created to carry on the work.

However, her commitment and desire to put over a message is not always so artistically dealt with. In "El don rechazado", narrated, like so many of Rojas González's stories, by a first-person outsider, an anthropologist, Rosario Castellanos mars a story with possibly ambiguous implications by adding on the last page a heavily didactic comment:

¡No, por favor, no llame usted a Manuela ni ingrata, ni abyecta, ni imbécil! No concluya usted, para evitarse

responsabilidades, que los indios no tienen remedio. Su actitud es muy comprensible. No distingue un caxlán de otro. Todos parecemos iguales. Cuando uno se le acerca con brutalidad, ya conoce el modo, ya sabe lo que debe hacer. Pero cuando otro es amable y le da sin exigir nada en cambio, no lo entiende. Está fuera del orden que impera en Ciudad Real. Teme que la trampa sea más peligrosa y se defiende a su modo: huyendo. (p.148)

As for the anti-American propaganda of "Arthur Smith salva su alma", although valid political comment on U.S. intervention of a kind which still continues,⁹ as literature it is heavy-handed and distasteful. One of the four most Indian-oriented of the cuentos, "La tregua", also suffers from the effects of an over-insistent ideological concern.

"La tregua" deals with the arrival of a caxlán at a remote Indian village. Encountered by a young girl, he is identified by her with a threatening spirit, el pukuj, and is finally set upon and brutally killed as such by the men of the village. One of the main points that emerges implicitly from this cuento is the total rift in outlook between Indian and caxlán, deriving partly from the Indian magico-religious cosmovisión but also from a combination of this and oppression at the hands of the ladino or caxlán. The caxlán in this story, it seems, is dying of exhaustion and thirst, having travelled so far to such a remote area. Ironically, however, Rominka perceives nothing of this, her interpretation of the situation being based on the concept of the pukuj, lord of all things, which sometimes appears in the guise of a ladino.

9. The continuation of American intervention in Mexico's Indian communities through the Summer Institute of Linguistics is evident from a recent article by Guillermo Correa, "El ILV nunca dejó de trabajar; con ayuda gubernamental emprende nuevas tareas", Proceso, 27 December 1982, pp.26-28.

Criticism of the ladino's oppression of the Indian thus emerges implicitly in that the traditional ogre has come to be identified with the ladino.

However, Castellanos adds a second story-line, a flashback, to emphasize ladino oppression of the Indian. Forced by poverty to distill their own alcohol, the Indians suffered appalling punishment: the authorities burned their dwellings, forcing the Indians back into the flames. The Indians' murder of the caxlán because of "cólera irracional" (p.33) and because he is a scape-goat is clearly intended to seem no worse than the Secretario Municipal's "escarmiento", converted by the hardships he had suffered locating the illicit stills into a more personal desire for vengeance.

The function of this second story-line is an explicitly ideological one, emphasizing the ladinos' brutal oppression of the Indian. Apart from the fact that it is not well integrated — emerging as an extra abruptly introduced by "No todos estaban allí" (p.30) when a child runs to tell the menfolk in the fields about the caxlán — it is largely redundant, for such oppression has already been implied by the major story-line, and in a much more subtle fashion.

The two sides of an argument — the Indian and the ladino — are much more successfully integrated in "La suerte de Teodoro Méndez Acubal", where Teodoro's good luck ironically turns to a different kind of suerte. We appreciate the actions of Teodoro — his daring to walk on the pavement, his lurking outside Don Agustín's shop, his feeling for something in his belt once he eventually dares to enter — because we know of the coin he has

found which has made him "otro hombre" (p.51). However, his arrest as a thief is not simply presented as undeserved oppression for we also perceive the thoughts and motivation of Don Agustín which bring this about.

Castellanos's success in this story comes from her juxtaposition of two different outlooks, each with a very limited and biased knowledge of the other but both incorporating universal human characteristics and failings. Thus we can sympathize with both and infer that it is the lack of communication between the two which causes the problem.

We see our main protagonist, Teodoro, an Indian, in a predicament which could happen the world over: he has found what to him is a lot of money. His actions and reactions can all be easily related to by the reader: he stoops to adjust his sandal in order to pick up the coin unobtrusively, he feels a sensation of power but also of fear because of his riches, and he fears momentarily that it might all have been a dream. His selfishness -- "No tenía por qué participar a nadie su hallazgo ni mucho menos compartirlo" (p.52) -- in itself universal, gives rise to further well-recognizable symptoms: vergüenza, soledad, even "un malestar físico" (p.52). Then, of course, there is the usual question of what to buy and of having to frequent unfamiliar places, making unfamiliar moves, in order to buy it.

Don Agustín, the antagonist, manifests reactions partly conditioned by his environment but also due to natural human emotions: he notices Teodoro because he is doing something unusual, he ponders on a reason and momentarily fears the worst: an uprising, vividly evoked in his imagination. His train of thought leads him

on to a more likely answer: "el hombre que aplastaba su nariz contra el cristal de su joyería era un ladrón" (p.57). And in this the timid niño viejo, responding to a typical human failing, sees an opportunity to increase his prestige, by warning the neighbourhood of such danger.

A successful universality is also achieved in the preceding story, "Aceite guapo". As with Catalina in Castellanos's later novel, Oficio de tinieblas (1962) here we have a central figure whose problem is universal — in this case old age — but whose response is based on local conditions and world-view. Thus in its moment of crisis this story satisfies the need for a point of contact between reader and protagonist but also distinguishes the protagonist as Indian.

As an old man, Daniel knows that he will be rejected. He therefore seeks refuge, as many might, in the Church. In his case, this entails becoming martoma or "mayordomo de algún santo de la iglesia" (p.39). Through his motivation to become martoma, his attempts to secure the position, and his actions once he has become martoma we discover various details about Indian belief and custom and also about the relationship between Indian and ladino.

The first detail of Indian belief concerns the Indians' interpretation of old age. Daniel knows he will be rejected as a source of evil because of his old age: "esas miradas Significaban que un hombre, si a tal edad ha sido respetado por la muerte, es porque ha hecho un pacto con las potencias oscuras, porque ha consentido en volverse el espía y el ejecutor de sus intenciones, cuando son malignas" (p.37). The syncretic nature

of Indian belief, incorporating both pre-Hispanic and Christian elements, is succinctly captured when Daniel has to reveal the name of his guardian spirit to the enganchador:

Daniel asintió; sabía que don Juvencio estaba en poder de su nombre verdadero, de su chulel y del waigel de su tribu. Tembló un instante, pero luego se repuso. Junto a los altares de San Juan ya no lo amenazaría ningún riesgo. (p.41)

Indian customs involved in the post of martoma emerge when Daniel attains his post: the ceremony of the cambio de ropa and the ritual alcohol consumption that accompanies the removal of each length of material from the image of the saint.

Through these customs and beliefs we gain an insight into the Indian world-view. The story offers us, in addition, however, details about the Indians' socio-economic status and relationship with the ladino. We see this in Daniel's failure to secure a loan from the hacendado, in his decision to enlist his two sons with the enganchador in order to obtain the advance payment, and we see it in how he is treated in the chemist's where he goes to buy aceite guapo to help him speak Spanish to the white saint he tends in the church. Ironically, while he had hoped by this means to attain the help of the saint to enjoy for longer the security of his post of martoma, the drunkenness caused by the aceite guapo brings Daniel to be thrown out of the church, his place of refuge. The irony is double-edged, however, for, having been cast out in a stupor, Daniel does come to find a permanent release from his predicament: the release of death.

Information about the Indian world-view and socio-economic position is by no means forced into the story. Rather, it comes over in relation to the central crisis we witness in the protagonist,

accompanied by his own personal reactions. The question of enganche to obtain money (though with no intention of doing the work) brings out Daniel's thought process, expressed initially in estilo indirecto libre:

Pediría el anticipo y se fugaría. ¿Quién iba a encontrarlo si se marchaba de su paraje? Además nadie tendría interés en buscarlo a él sino a sus hijos, que eran los del compromiso, y de quienes llevaría el retrato. Si los encontraban los fiscales y los obligaban a irse a las fincas, Daniel estaría contento. Justo castigo al abandono en que lo mantuvieron durante tantos años; justo castigo a su ingratitud, a la dureza de su corazón. (p.41)

The whole story is extremely successful in its integration of Indian concerns along with individual focus and profound universal human appeal, all springing from a central protagonist caught at a time of crisis.

With the cuentos of Castellanos, then, we find again the benefits of universal terms of reference and also the incorporation into the story of both the indigenous outlook and the Indian's position in relation to the ladino. As regards technical advances, although in "Modesta Gómez", one of the non-indigenista stories, Castellanos comes close to the dual narrative used by Zepeda, her principal technical contribution is in her experimentation with different time-scales in "La muerte del tigre", a less far-reaching approach than Zepeda's first-person Indian narrative. It is in the question of didacticism, however, that Castellanos falls very much behind Zepeda. While, as we shall later see, she does put literary art first in her indigenista novels, relying in Oficio de tinieblas on the indigenous cosmovisión to justify Indian violence rather than offset it by worse ladino violence, she seems to see the cuento more as a vehicle for ideological comment. On occasion, as we saw in "La tregua", she expresses this too overtly.

EMMA DOLUJANOFF: CUENTOS DEL DESIERTO

The thirteen stories of Emma Dolujanoff's Cuentos del desierto¹⁰ deal with Indians from the North of Mexico: Mayos from the state of Sonora. In the context of the indigenista short story, these stand at the opposite extreme from El diosero for only in three of them do Indian customs play a significant part.

The story in which this aspect is most evident is "La correría del venado", involving a special deer hunt which qualifies the young men who have participated to get married. However, although this is central to the plot, and the action includes the ritual and the hunt, the primary focus is a personal one. It concerns a young man whose attitude and aspirations conflict both with traditional custom and with family pressures. Lázaro is unwilling to participate in the hunt and will not kill a deer because he has a pet one at home. He is also being pressurized by his family to marry not the girl of his choice but the pregnant La Coyo, his deceased elder brother's cast-off. Due to these additional elements involving a central protagonist, it is very much a personal and psychological emphasis we find in this story rather than ethnological, no doubt revealing Dolujanoff's neuro-psychiatric training.

Indian customs and belief are used also as the axis of the story in "El pascola" and "El Huellero". In the latter, only God's forgiveness can save Ignacio's wife from death at her husband's hands, for she has helped and probably slept with a

10. 2nd edition (Mexico: UNAM, 1972). All subsequent references are to this edition.

murderer. Traditional belief, expressed by Ignacio's father, reveals how God's forgiveness can be ascertained:

-En las huellas de los justos retoña el maíz. Es el pecado el que pudre el grano, pero a veces Dios perdona cuando no hay sangre. Si es que es buena de veras y la tierra no está muy enconada por su pecado, puede ser que en siete días se aparezcan las puntas verdes de los tallos. (p.109)

This belief and traditional justice may be the axis of the plot; the outcome, however, springs from a more universal sentiment in the main protagonist: love for his wife and a desire to forgive: "-Pues como si la hubiera visto . . . más que otra cosa, sentí como si fuera a brotar el grano" (p.113).

In "El pascola", the tradition that the pascola dancer must tell the truth is central for it is used to ascertain the "truth" about a crime. What emerges over and above this, however, in this complex tale, is Matías's eventual love for his crippled wife and his family ties. For these reasons the innocent Matías gives himself up as the criminal, thus avoiding betraying his brother, the true culprit, while saving the unjustly accused young Matías, his wife's son by another man.

It is a personal emphasis, asserting universal human sentiments, that characterizes Cuentos del desierto as a whole, even in these, the three most ethnologically oriented stories in the collection. This sets it apart from the exoticism of many of the early indigenista novels. The stories here deal primarily with universal problems like love, death, or disease as their key moment of crisis, portraying the reactions of one central character, occasionally more, in the face of such problems.

An eternal triangle provokes the moment of crisis in the

opening story, "María Galdina", when she sends her husband hunting one night and brings home a white man, a yori, from the Casa Grande. The story weaves in both a traditional world-view through the intervention of Lola la Vieja and her warning and also the conflict between Indian and white man, implied in the love triangle. Uppermost, however, is the personal focus on Juan Eugenio, whose love for María Galdina is forever present: he hopes to find her a better variety of fish; he accepts her proposal of hunting a deer, despite his misgivings about her going to the Casa Grande; on his return he watches the yori leave their hut but yet can still embrace his wife lovingly and cast the presence of the yori from his mind.

It is a touching tale, as Juan Eugenio's opening and closing words — "Estoy muy triste" — imply, but it is not just a sentimental little story relating to his wife's infidelity. Rather, the sadness is part of an all-pervading melancholy which seems to derive from the inevitability of a life of poverty, an unvarying and meagre diet of fish, and the unavoidable supremacy in everything of the white man.

Jorge Olmo has complained of a "falta total de compromiso" in this collection, of "ningún afán de solidaridad, ya sea sentimental o intelectual",¹¹ What he fails to appreciate, however, is that Emma Dolujanoff's commitment, like Zepeda's is more subtle than propagandistic social realism or an overt ideological message. Particularly surprising is Olmo's reference to a lack of "solidaridad

11. "Emma Dolujanoff: Cuentos del desierto", Revista de la Universidad de México, 13, no.9 (May 1959).

sentimental", for it is precisely by means of a character's universally identifiable feelings that Dolujanoff evokes contact between reader and protagonist.

We can feel, for example, for Toribio Chacón's respect for his dying father's wish for him to marry another girl from the one he loves but also with his eventual anger against the vieja bruja Apolonia who put this idea — which has brought Toribio so much suffering — into his father's head. Likewise, we sympathize with Toño's father's preoccupation with his child's blackening hand in "Las ollas de los remedios" and feel for his anger at the curandera's avarice and his final outburst of violence when his child dies yet could have been saved. In "Dios me prestó sus manos" we can appreciate the grandmother's fear of death while Tencho's love for her and desperation to save her from the "pestilencia negra" (as in the previous story) which is spreading up her leg is entirely understandable, as is his sense of miracle, evident in the title, when he successfully amputates and binds up the leg himself.

In these last three cuentos and, indeed, in the six remaining in the collection not yet discussed in detail, Dolujanoff uses a first-person narrator. This is always the local protagonist, never the first-person outsider used as narrator by Rojas González and once by Castellanos. Although Dolujanoff does not often use the first-person narrator like Zepeda does in "Benzulul" and "Viento" — to present from within the more unusual facets of the Indian cosmovisión — the first-person narrator does, of course, immediately evoke reader sympathy and identification.

The variety of first-person narrators Dolujanoff uses is

impressive: the cross-eyed fisherman of "La cuesta de las ballenas" whose confessional story reveals that the only woman he ever slept with was his brother's wife; the young girl of "Llano grande" who looks back a year later on her mother's death when they left home; the young man who saves his grandmother; the father who fails to save his son; the peon of "Siéntate Teófilo" who decides to leave his job for fear of what his boss has in mind for him; the young Tatán, faced with an apparent ghost who brings him a letter from his faithless loved-one.

The first-person narrative allows Dolujanoff to penetrate into the mind of her characters. Prócoro confesses he has no regrets about having slept with Tanasia: "Y después de todo este tiempo, Dios no me ha dado el arrepentimiento, porque yo sólo siento una pena muy grande que me maltrata por dentro, pero no tengo remordimiento . . . " (p.44). We see the curandera's avarice in "Las ollas de los remedios" through the father, who is ill able to pay: "Vieja mula, avorazada, sinvergüenza. Le di ochenta centavos más. También se puso a contarlos y también se le hicieron pocos" (p.82). It is the first-person narrator which allows us fully to appreciate Toribio Chacón's predicament: having gone to ask Tiburcia's hand in marriage, as was his father's last wish, he ends up helping the family with a cow stuck in the mud: "Sus patitas . . . malditas sus patotas y sus becerros y toda ella completa. Por el pezcuezo es por donde yo quisiera pasarle el mecate para írselo apretando con todo mi coraje y sacarla bien muerta de este atascadero" (p.123). This annoyance increases when another prospective husband turns up, his interruption interfering with the job of saving the cow: "'El diablo es el que

te tiene tan ayudado y tan aconsejado de venir con tus saludos a estas malas horas¹, sigo pensando yo al mirar cómo va sumiéndose la pata que soltó Regino" (p.126). Finally we have direct access to his anger about his final fate with a stream of consciousness technique used for the whole of Part iii: "-Apolonia, Apolonia . . . ! vieja bruja, bruja negra, bruja mentirosa . . . Apolonia, Apolonia, bruja ratera, hija del diablo . . . Dios te tenga condenada y más que condenada por haberle metido en la cabeza al difunto Toribio Chacón, todas estas desgracias mías" (p.129).

Stream of consciousness is used again in "El venado niño", this time for the whole of the cuento, an evocation of daily life and aspiration to transcendence: "Santo pasmado y terco: el rezo de mi madre, el canto de mi padre, ¡cántaro vacío! Yo soy Juana, soy Juanita, adentro me cabe un río. Yo soy Juana llorando y tú, más desidia que santo" (p.52).

First-person narrative caters for easy flash-back, as we see in "Arriba el mezquite" where the current narrative slips into recollection: "También me tendí yo, pero no para dormir, sólo esperando a que amaneciera. No dormíamos desde que ella se fue, de eso eran ya cinco días. El domingo salió muy de mañanita, dijo que a misa" (p.67). We are brought back to the present over three pages later with "De todo eso me acordaba yo, mientras estábamos tumbados esperando a que amaneciera" (p.70).

Much more extensive use of this retrospective emphasis characterizes "Siéntate Teófilo". This is the most technically complex of the cuentos here, especially in the temporal sphere, for the whole story is built up around the moment when Teófilo is called in to see his boss and goes over in his mind the possible

motives for being summoned and the background which suggests them. By means of a simultaneous retrospective focus we receive a vivid impression of how Teófilo expresses himself, we get to see the workings of his mind, his attitudes and how he sees his boss. Furthermore, his memories, sometimes dramatized in dialogue, offer us an insight into the relationship between patrón and peón, thus vindicating his decision to leave before finding out why the boss has summoned him:

En eso estaba yo pensando sin poderme mover todavía cuando, no sé cómo, se me salen los sapos de las orejas y oigo a don Pablo:

-Pero ¿dónde vas indio maldito? ¡Siéntate, te digo!

Entonces yo pude ganar la puerta y agarrarme de la manija. Él siguió hablando:

-No te vayas, Teófilo . . . ¿pero cómo te atreves? ¡Siéntate, idiota!

Yo seguía agarrado de la manija, oyéndolo nomás. Él no salía de lo mismo: -Siéntate y siéntate.

Ya no quise seguir oyendo ni averiguar qué era lo que quería con tenerme allí sentado. Salí corriendo y no paré hasta el jacal nuestro y se lo platiqué todo a mi jefecita. (p.62)

The use of the recurrent key phrase "Siéntate Teófilo" in this story to pin-point the axis is a highly effective device. "Dios me prestó sus manos", likewise, has recourse to variations on the urgent central plea of "Por vida tuya, Tencho. No dejes que me muera debajo de un mezquite", again forming the axis of the story. We are reminded by both of these cuentos, in this use of a recurrent key phrase, of Rulfo's "Diles que no me maten".

Looking back on Dolujanoff's cuentos, we welcome the technical advances evident in retrospective passages and stream of consciousness. Incorporation of a psychological focus and the use of first-person Indian narrators are further significant features enabling us to penetrate into the indigenous characters' outlook. Occasionally, we cannot be sure if the protagonists

are, in fact, Indians. Usually a passing reference to the yorí, the inclusion of a few elements of the indigenous world-view and customs, and once in a while the word "indio", generally spoken by a white man, distinguish the protagonists as Indian people. In four or five of the stories, all the same, we cannot be sure. Nevertheless, we can hardly assert this as a criticism. Rather, it emphasizes the universality of Dolujanoff's approach, a universality which is perhaps her most striking contribution to the indigenista genre. We can, therefore, agree wholeheartedly with the opinion of one of her reviewers: "De seres humanos están hechos estos cuentos".¹²

MARÍA LOMBARDO DE CASO: LA CULEBRA TAPÓ EL RÍO

María Lombardo de Caso's La culebra tapó el río¹³ has been described by Joseph Sommers as "más cercano en largura y alcance a cuento que a novela".¹⁴ Although longer than any other cuento we have studied in this chapter, La culebra tapó el río is still only some 18,000 words long. Besides, it does not have the breadth of vision we tend to associate with the novel: it has a single central protagonist (and his dog) with only two other characters (and one other dog) individualized; a single theme

12. O.S., "Dolujanoff, Emma: Cuentos del desierto", Estaciones: Revista Literaria de México, 4, no.14 (Summer 1959), 241-42 (p.242).

13. (Xalapa, Mexico: Universidad Veracruzana, 1962). All subsequent references are to this edition.

14. "El ciclo de Chiapas: nueva corriente literaria", Cuadernos Americanos, Year XXIII, 133, no.2 (March-April 1964), 246-61 (p.254).

-- hunger -- relating to the protagonist; and one central indig-
enous belief. This central belief, that the dead must be accom-
panied by a dog on their journey over the River to the happiness
of the Other World, interacts with the question of hunger to pose
the central crisis of the cuento: although the Indians' starving
dogs are ravaging the crops, if the Indians keep all the food for
themselves the dogs will die, thus jeopardizing the people's
passage to the Other World:

Jamás podrían desprenderse de la pobreza hasta que,
acompañados de sus perros, pasaran a la otra margen del
Río donde para siempre serían felices.

Si los perros, como había dicho Nicio, se les adelan-
taban, entonces . . . (p.32)

The central crisis relates directly to our child protagonist
for, at the end of the story, his beloved dog, having had its
teeth pulled out, like all the rest, dies: "Pero Monito no se
movió. Ahora empezaba a cruzar las turbulentas aguas que para
siempre lo separaban de su amo" (p.79). Taken in the context of
the central belief and moment of crisis, this has clear symbolic
implications: Juan, the child protagonist, and possibly by
extension the Indian in general, is condemned to a life of
wretched poverty. This symbolic implication is emphasized by
the "para siempre" and by the circular structure of the book,
which ends as it began with the discovery of five snails to eat.
Even the onset of rain immediately prior to the ending does not
really relieve the pessimism for drought has struck before and no
doubt will strike again.

There is no doubt that María Lombardo was committed to the
Indian. However, her protest is not overt. Cevallos has commented
that this work reveals that "la obra literaria puede servir, no

solamente para expresar la belleza, sino para estimular la acción de justicia social" and that although nothing is directly said about the latter it does shine through.¹⁵ The subtle symbolism of the end of the story, which critics have overlooked, is one of Lombardo's means of gently implying a message.

Another means of making the reader aware of the predicament of the Indian is her evocation of sympathy for the central protagonist. This is achieved partly by various emotive features, all of which are universally appreciable. Firstly, Juan is a child, which in itself has a certain emotive appeal. He is also a loving child, judging from his bond with his dog, and this increases our emotional response to him. His hunger adds to our sympathy, though the author is careful not to over-exploit the lengths Juan is driven to by hunger. Instead she keeps the opening incident about the snails on a mildly humorous level:

De pronto el estómago se le hizo una bolita . . . ¿Esos ojos pelones, estarían espiándole las tripas?
¡Recaracho! . . . ¿Le estaría caminando, ahora, por toda la barriga? (p.9)

Sommers holds that "El patetismo adquiere proporciones exageradas" due to the boy's (and the dog's) physical deformities¹⁶ but, in fact, this aspect receives little emphasis. Certainly, the sentimentality is not so stressed as in Rojas González's "Las vacas de Quiviquinta", also dealing with the theme of hunger. Besides, the danger of an over-sentimental presentation of Juan is offset by his being naughty and even inconsiderate: he may

15. Miguel Ángel Cevallos, "La culebra tapó el río", Novedades, 6 November 1962, p.5.

16. "El ciclo de Chiapas", p.254.

think of taking the tuza he has found back to his mother for food but is also interested in the prestige of hunter it will give him; he slips out of collecting wood for her but still hopes to find some food awaiting him on his return home.

It is not only through an emotive appeal that María Lombardo seeks reader identification with Juan. The mode of expression is direct and simple, achieving, as one critic aptly comments, "cierto sabor a familiaridad".¹⁷ Furthermore, the narrative, although third-person, tends to use Juan as a centre of consciousness and often exploits the capacity for interiorization of estilo indirecto libre:

Lanzó un suspiro al cerrar la puerta; también faltaba el atole que esperaba encontrar en su jícara; y no había tortillas para la cena. Quizá su madre regresara con los restos de la bebida en el fondo de la olla, y aun cuando esto no se acostumbraba, algunas veces solía hacerlo. Entonces podría calmar los retortijones que otra vez empezaban a fastidiarlo. ¿Y Monito . . . ? Pues tendría que contentarse, una vez más, con perseguir a la luz de las estrellas algún bicho nocturno que se atreviera a salir de su madriguera. ¿Y los otros perros . . . ? (p.24)

In fact, even Juan's spoken utterances, which lighten the narrative, tend to be an expression of his inner thoughts, for they are either chatter spoken to his dog or prayers directed to natural deities.

A child protagonist with whom we sympathize is also a successful means of introduction to the indigenous magico-religious cosmovisión. As Rosario Castellanos also shows in her novel, Balún-canán (1957), we are perhaps more willing to accept a magical view in a child than in an adult. Juan regards lightning

17. Rubén Salazar Mallén, quoted in Elena Poniatowska, "María Caso", México en la Cultura, 26 July 1959, pp.1-2.

as a powerful deity which lives in the cave. Through him we also appreciate the belief that gives the book its title: the dry river is caused by "una culebra muy gorda que se mete en el sumidero de la montaña y ataja con su enorme cuerpo la corriente" (p.15).

Juan is also used to reveal to us the central belief of the story concerning dogs accompanying the dead. We do not see this directly through his belief, as with el Rayo, but rather we learn through his curiosity when he spies on the old men in discussion: a situation which adds an element of drama and suspense. Both directly and indirectly, Juan thus offers an easily assimilable insight into the world-view of the Indians of the area.

The overall result is a successful triple focus on the Indian, incorporating the following: a personal emphasis on Juan, which draws us to sympathize with him; a reminder, through the question of hunger and the isolation suffered by both our protagonist and the whole tribe, of the low socio-economic position of the Indian; and an insight into the indigenous world-view, an element of which is dramatized in the story. Apart from the use of estilo indirecto libre for interiorization, a feature we also find with Castellanos, Lombardo de Caso's major innovation in this story is the use of an Indian child protagonist.

In the light of the material studied in this chapter, on the whole we find that the cuento form tends to avert the three main pitfalls evident in the early indigenista novel: ideological thrust, folkloric emphasis, and lack of unity and, furthermore, that it evades the problem of deficient character creation often resulting from the first two of these. Nonetheless, the

cuento form does not offer a complete answer to such problems, as we see particularly with Rosario Castellanos and Rojas González, who sometimes introduce a didactic element which can have unfortunate repercussions in the story's unity. In addition, new possibilities, perhaps largely attributable to the cuento form, with its frequent final twist, are occasional humour and irony.

There are, however, also various significant advances for the indigenista genre in these cuentos — both in technical proficiency and in approaching an inside view of the Indian — which cannot be attributed merely to the short story form. Most important of these are the use of a first-person Indian narrative and of a child protagonist, a greater interiorization and personal focus, and the introduction of more universal terms of reference. In order to see if any of these independent breakthroughs emerge outside the cuento and also to assess whether any advance can be made in the original problem areas without the benefits of the short story form we must now return to the development of the indigenista genre in the novel.

CHAPTER III

THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE NOVELS OF RAMÓN RUBÍN

The quantity of Ramón Rubín's indigenista output in itself places him in a position of importance. In addition to various cuentos about the Indian, he wrote three novelas indigenistas: El llamado dolor de los tzotziles (1949), El canto de la grilla (1952), and La bruma lo vuelve azul (1954). While his cuentos mark no advance on those of Rojas González, his indigenista novels — the first and the third in particular — make several important contributions to the genre, most especially in the structural field.

Both El llamado dolor and La bruma have a balanced structure which lends an artistic coherence that the early novels — with the possible exception of Lola Casanova and the less indigenista El resplandor — failed to achieve. It is also of note that Rubín's novels have inspired a study with as "literary" an emphasis as that of Eleanor Ringwald's "Imagery in the Works of Ramón Rubín". In addition, we find that Rubín succeeds in functionally integrating potentially costumbrista material.

As regards the presentation of his indigenous protagonists, of considerable interest is the balance Rubín achieves between identifying them as Indians but at the same time endowing them with a certain individuality and universal appeal. The psychological emphasis of Rubín's novels is also of note, though it must not be overlooked that in Rubín's case this is accompanied by a distinct authorial presence.

The structure of El llamado dolor has attracted favourable critical comment. César Rodríguez Chicharro, despite the insistence on socio-economic aspects uppermost in his study of the Mexican indigenista novel, found this novel worthy of a structural analysis in order to demonstrate that, "La arquitectura de la obra no tiene falla alguna".¹ Our structural analysis here varies from the five-block chapter division proposed by Rodríguez Chicharro and, in fact, reveals a more balanced structure than the one he perceived.

A plot-centred analysis of El llamado dolor reveals that the novel falls into three parts (unspecified by textual division): Part I: Chapters 1-8; Part II: Chapters 9-19; Part III: Chapters 20-30. The centre part reflects in miniature the structure of the whole as it can again be divided into three: Chapters 9-15; Chapters 16-17; Chapters 18-19. In overall terms, the three parts of the whole correspond to Exposition, Development and Resolution.

In addition to general background, Part I introduces the central question of José Damián and María Manuela's separation, imposed on them by Tzotzil tribal tradition because in four years the marriage has proved barren. The problem is presented from the point of view of each partner: José Damián's retrospective analysis of the situation on the morning of their separation opens the novel; Chapter 5 gives a retrospective view of the problem as concerns María Manuela when she is out alone tending the couple's sheep. Their separation, and the division of their possessions

1. "La novela indigenista mexicana" (unpublished Master's thesis, Mexico: UNAM, Filosofía y Letras, 1959), p.110.

between them, occurs towards the end of the part with María Manuela's exile to the mountains. Part I closes with the departure from the village of José Damián: unable to continue life there as before without his wife, he leaves for the coffee plantations of Soconusco.

Part II deals with the life of each away from the village, the first and third sections centring on José Damián, the short second section on María Manuela. This central section of the central part also contains the novel's fulcrum with the birth of a baby to María Manuela. (Her apparent sterility turns out merely to be retarded physical development.) This possible turning point, the key to remedying the couple's separation, takes place in Chapter 17, a little after the middle of the novel in chapter terms but falling centrally as regards the number of pages.

Preceding this possible turning point, however, a counterforce has emerged: the first section of Part II introduces the initial stages of José Damián's slaughter of sheep, the factor which will bring about the final separation of the couple. However, such a conclusion is not put over in any way as inevitable. Tension between force and counterforce is maintained for in the third section of Part II José Damián abandons his job at the slaughter-house and also forsakes his recent liaison with the mestiza, Clotilde, returning home to wife and child. The way is left open, therefore, for a happy resolution although the question of José Damián's sheep-slaughtering lies latent as a counterforce.

There is a symbolism in Part II which reinforces the structural pattern. The mountains, through their clear air and through being the place of María Manuela's baby's birth, have

associations of goodness, purity, and new life in contrast with the sordid connotations of the lowlands: sheep-slaughtering and prostitution. It is the mountains which produce the hopeful element, the lowlands the counterforce.

In Part III the counterforce gradually gains weight as José Damián turns to killing the Tzotzils' sheep at night in secret. However, before the climax of his pursuit by the Indians, enraged at the discovery of his "crime" — an exciting moment drawn out over two chapters — our hopes are rekindled along with María Manuela's own when she throws away her husband's knife. The high spirits of the festivities in San Juan Chamula at this point reinforce this optimism. In the end, however, all serves only to highlight the final tragic conclusion with the triumph of the counterforce: the discovery of José Damián's sheep-slaughtering provokes the couple's definitive separation.

The architecturally satisfying three-part structure of El callado dolor is enhanced by parallelism between the first and last parts. Both deal with a matter relating to the couple which is unacceptable to Tzotzil cultural tradition as it is portrayed here. In the first part this concerns the woman, María Manuela, and her sterility which renders the marriage unacceptable in Tzotzil terms because it denies the man the right to a family. Tzotzil legal intervention brings the separation of the couple and the division of their possessions. Part III deals with an unacceptable trait in the man, José Damián: his urge to kill sheep, which to the Tzotzils are sacred animals. This, too, brings legal intervention culminating in the separation of the couple, this time with José Damián's being "banished", either by

death or by exile amongst the mestizos. The destruction of the couple's life together is more definitive this time, as is suggested by the burning of their home and belongings and the distribution of their animals amongst other people rather than between the two of them.

In addition to the overall structure of this novel, there are various smaller elements of linkage which lend an inter-chapter coherence. The opening words of each of the first three chapters are linked by following a progression from cold night to the approach of dawn on the morning of the couple's initial separation: "Sobre el disperso pueblo de los tzotziles del distrito de Las Casas declinaba frígida la noche";² "El frío de la madrugada se fue tornando más sutil con el transcurso de los minutos" (p.19); "Apenas comenzando a alumbrar la aurora . . . " (p.25).

There are also various parallel moments which link successive chapters. Chapter 6 closes with José Damián's calling his dog back after it had followed the exiled María Manuela out of the village while the following chapter ends with his sad realization that the dog has followed her permanently. Chapter 5 draws to a close with María Manuela's return home after tending her sheep, a moment which forms a link to the returning home of the Tzotzil men from market at the opening of the following chapter. The end of Chapter 8 and of Chapter 9 contain parallel reflections on José Damián's predicament: "ya mi vida no tiene razón; ni a qué tirarle" (p.54); "tenía roto el sentido mismo de su existencia" (p.61).

2. Ramón Rubín, El callado dolor de los tzotziles, second edition (Mexico: Libro-Mex, 1957), p.9. All subsequent references are to this edition.

This has the effect of linking the two chapters, particularly important at this point for it also spans the break between Parts I and II and the move from the village to the lowlands.

The integration into Part II of the chapters of the central section, concerning María Manuela, is achieved by a certain parallelism, principally involving contrast. At the end of Part II, section i, José Damián has just set up house with another woman, Clotilde. While the question of such a relationship leads us to think of María Manuela, there is the contrast that one relationship has been formed, the other broken up. Furthermore, there is a clear contrast between the nature of Clotilde, who is little better than a prostitute, and the pregnancy and childbirth of María Manuela, which transcends such sordidness, a contrast underlined by the geographical position of each. Such details, in conjunction with the overall three-part structure of El callado dolor produce a pleasingly coherent artistic whole.

Like Rubín's first indigenista novel, La bruma lo vuelve azul also has a balanced structure. It is a largely chronological, monolinear narrative, without the potential difficulties of integrating different simultaneous events. However, there is a possible structural problem posed by its having two principal protagonists, father and son, one apparently dominating the novel's early chapters, the other its subsequent chapters. Indeed, D.L. Schmidt holds that "the novel's unity is greatly undermined by centering the first half around Antonio Mijares and the second around his son, Kanamayé".³

3. Donald Lee Schmidt, "Changing Narrative Techniques in the Mexican indigenista Novel" (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Kansas, 1972), p.189.

Schmidt's view seems at first convincing for Antonio Mijares, who introduces the novel and is an important figure initially, largely disappears from the narrative at the beginning of the third of the four parts. Kanamayé, on the other hand, is not born until the end of Part I and does not become an active figure until the end of Part II. However, the fact that Kanamayé is instrumental in the plot long before his birth casts doubt on the validity of Schmidt's interpretation of the narrative as two separate halves. After all, it is the rape of Kanamayé's mother by the white bandit, Cuatrodedos, and the possibility that Kanamayé was conceived at this point that gives rise to the whole story of La bruma.

A careful examination of the distribution of pages in each of the four parts that are specified by textual division reveals a point overlooked by Schmidt in his division of the novel into two halves: the four parts are by no means equal in length. In fact, the combined length of Parts II and III is more or less equal to that of Part IV. This suggests, rather, a three-section structure where the first section forms an extended Exposition and the remaining two sections, between which there is a major turning point, comprise the main body of the novel, totalling about three-quarters of its length.

<u>Part</u> (Rubín's textual division)	<u>No. of pages</u> (to nearest whole number)	<u>Proposed</u> <u>Section</u>
I	25	I
II	17	II
III	19	
IV	35	III

Section I, the Exposition, recounts events (and their repercussions) leading up to Kanamayé's birth, which occurs at the end of the section. Section II deals with Kanamayé at the stage when he thinks he is a pure Huichol Indian while in Section III he is under the impression that he is the son of Cuatrodedos and, therefore, part vecino (i.e. mestizo). These two sections run parallel. Kanamayé is born into the Huichol world just before Section II while just before Section III he acquires a new identity, thinking he is Cuatrodedos's son. A further parallel emerges in that in Section II he is controlled by his Huichol father, Antonio Mijares, while in Section III his actions are dictated by his knowledge of Cuatrodedos, his supposed vecino father. There is a parallel between the end of these two sections also: at the end of Section II Kanamayé comes to a realization that he must be Cuatrodedos's son; towards the end of the last section he comes to the opposite conclusion and realizes, after seeing his own likeness in Kopitzahui, his father's daughter by another wife, that Mijares was his true father after all.

Considering the clear three-section structure of La bruma, we might question why Rubín specified four parts in his textual division. The immediate reason is plain to see: there is a six-year gap between Rubín's Parts II and III, much like the six years in the school spent between Parts III and IV. Furthermore, this six-year division in the second section marks Kanamayé's transition from childhood to adolescence and coincides both with his mother's death and his father's retreat from beating him. In addition, there is a more technical feature which justifies the division into two of the second section: without making it

sluggish, it allows the section to be drawn out over a greater time-span and this highlights the accelerating downward spiral to degeneration and tragedy evident in the last section.

As in El callado dolor, in La bruma Rubín uses the interplay of alternating force and counterforce in order to create and relieve tension. We see this constantly in the early stages of the novel with the vacillating indications of Kanamayé's paternity. When Antonio Mijares discovers his wife's pregnancy he thinks it unlikely that she should have conceived a child of his "en víspas de su asalto y violación por el bandolero",⁴ for she had not borne any children in the last four years and Mijares had been away since her rape. The moment of truth at Kanamayé's birth is not definitive for the new-born child is "demasiado enrojecido y congestionado por el esfuerzo de su llegada a la vida para que se pudiera establecer un grado en su pigmentación" (p.31). However, the baby is described as being "Un niño como los demás niños huicholes, y con los cinco dedos de cada mano completos" (p.31) and Antonio Mijares seems to accept the latter unreliable detail for a while as an indication that the boy is not Cuatrodedos's son. Nevertheless, Lupe then fails to complete a "test": that of climbing up a hill heavily laden without a pause, though the implications of this again unreliable indication are subsequently offset by the offer of the old Huichol, Vicente, whose father had been killed by the vecinos, to be the boy's godfather. This, in turn, is counteracted by Kanamayé's crying

4. Ramón Rubín, La bruma lo vuelve azul (Mexico: FCE, 1954), p.26. All subsequent references are to this edition.

at his Indian baptism but smiling at his Christian one and by the priest's coincidental attempt to name him José de Jesús, which is Cuatrodedos's name.

While tension of this nature is present to some degree in the whole novel until the climax of Kanamayé's final discovery of a family likeness between himself and his half-sister, there is, especially in Rubín's Part II, an additional source of fluctuation in narrative tension. This is provided by Kanamayé's alternately finding affection — from his mother; from his two half-sisters; from Tata Chuy Taemú — then being deprived of it. Thus Rubín maintains the necessary narrative tension, focusing on our main protagonist, even at moments when the original question of Kanamayé's paternity is not uppermost.

As in El callado dolor, various parallel moments also lend coherence to the novel. Although Kanamayé is unaware of it, his attempted rape of Kopitzahui forms a parallel with Cuatrodedos's rape of Lupe and marks the lowest point of Kanamayé's degeneration, and emulation, both conscious and subconscious, of Cuatrodedos. As Kanamayé attempts to hold Kopitzahui down while she clutches her baby, a parallel is also drawn with Antonio Mijares's beating of Lupe while she held Kanamayé in her arms. Kanamayé consequently links Kopitzahui's defensive love with that same reaction in his own mother and, likening the hatred on Kopitzahui's face to that which as a babe-in-arms he witnessed on his father's face, he instinctively reacts with fear, thus giving Kopitzahui the opportunity to break free. By means of such parallels, Rubín effectively links events a generation apart, in first and last sections, thus giving an overall unity to the novel.

Another connection which spans two generations is a thematic parallel between the predicament and reactions of Antonio Mijares and Kanamayé, the father acting as a preliminary manifestation of traits that emerge in the son. Both have a strong sense of amour-propre in their reaction to personal affront (Antonio Mijares in the case of his wife's rape; Kanamayé in the face of fickle affection) and both take violent and morbid revenge: Antonio Mijares sexually mutilates Cuatrodedos's corpse and beats his own wife to death; Kanamayé attempts to rape his half-sister and plans to rob Tata Chuy Taemú.

In both El callado dolor and La bruma, then, we find a pleasing three-part structure where the first part acts as an extended Exposition. The unity of each novel is enhanced by various parallelistic elements while the interplay of opposing forces maintains narrative tension.

The structure of El canto de la grilla is less striking in comparison. We do find, however, a fulcrum in Chapter 9 — at the centre of the novel in page terms — with the exogamous marriage of Mateo and Iyali. This brings into play the counter-force which emerges at the end of the chapter: Esmeraldo the herbalist, Mateo's father, gives a potion to Iyali in order to make her too ill to consummate the marriage, thus making it possible to annul it. However, Mateo refuses to accept such an outcome and, ironically, asks his father's help to cure Iyali, thus enabling his father to continue to administer the poison under the guise of curing Iyali. By such means, narrative tension is kept up in El canto, making it an exciting novel to read, though aesthetically it is not of the calibre of El callado dolor nor La bruma.

A feature which enhances the aesthetic quality of both El llamado dolor and La bruma is their imagery. Eleanor Ringwald points out a particularly evocative kind of imagery that is found in these two novels: "Rubín catches the suffering of his people in images which express sensations of heaviness or pain".⁵ At the end of El llamado dolor, María Manuela's suffering is likened to the sky weighing down on her: "sintió que la aplastaba un firmamento . . . " (p.206). This type of image evokes José Damián's suffering too, when he leaves the village after the initial separation: tratando de huirle a una amargura que parecía cabalgar, con el garlo, a sus espaldas" (p.54).

The predominance of images of burdens clearly suggests the pain of the existential condition, as is confirmed by a comment on José Damián's tump-line: "la huella del sudadero del mecapan, estigma imborrable que la trágica condición de chamula imprimía en su frente" (p.11).

Images of pain and suffering are predominant in La bruma too. Antonio Mijares's mental suffering is compared by inverse correlation to the physical pain he expects Lupe to undergo in being punished: "Cada latigazo abriría cinco surcos de sangre en la epidermis morena y sedosa . . . Pero, a la vez, iba a arrancar un pedazo de la púa moral que traspasaba el corazón del ofendido" (p.8).

There are further tactile evocations of pain which, rather than put the predicament of the characters over in purely universal terms, also imply the pantheistic nature of the Indian Weltanschauung.

5. "Imagery in the Works of Ramón Rubín", Hispania, 53, no.2 (May 1970), 225-29 (p.226).

As Antonio Mijares returns home from being punished for his first beating of Lupe he feels the sun burning down on his beaten back: "Tayao, el sol padre de todos los dioses, se burlaba de él con sus carcajadas de lumbre" (p.20). A similar image evokes Kanamayé as being out of tune with Nature and her deities: "Y hasta Tayao . . . parecía haber descubierto en la delgadez de su epidermis la calidad de apóstata de los usos de sus venerables hijos, los huicholes, y se complacía arañando con furor en ella hasta levantarle ampollas y escoriaciones" (p.74).

In La bruma, we also have the imagery associated with the colour blue, symbolic, as Ringwald suggests, of hope (p.226). Apart from the title, the first mention of blue relates to goodness and to the gods: ". . . hacia el oriente . . . a las deidades que debían estar asomadas por esos lados del horizonte presenciando el rito desde donde la distancia y la bruma lo vuelven todo azul" (p.15). Another reference relates blue to an other-world paradise where Kanamayé's mother will go after death: ". . . por un sendero blando y amable, hasta el otro lado de las altas cumbres que la bruma volvía azules sobre el horizonte oriental" (p.48). The optimism of blue at this stage is confirmed by its association with the east, the source of dawn and new light.

It is not until near the end of the novel, as Kanamayé heads for degeneration and tragedy, that it becomes clear that the hope symbolized by the colour blue is illusory: "¿Ves aquellas sierras lejanas? La bruma y la distancia las vuelven azules; pero nomás métete en ellas y vas a ver que son un puro y pardo erial . . . ; puritita pelonera . . . " (pp.92-93). The complete destruction of hope is suggested in the last words of the novel:

"Esa bruma que vuelve azules las perspectivas se había teñido de negro" (p.105).

The specific symbolism of blue in this case may not be universally recognized though the attraction of what is distant is a common concept. In any case, the symbolic implication of the imagery surrounding blue — optimism and false hope — certainly is universal.

One of the most striking sets of imagery in El callado dolor which Ringwald omits to mention is that relating to warmth and cold. The very familiarity of the associations makes the images universally comprehensible: cold in this novel is associated with the threat of separation and with loneliness; warmth, on the other hand, suggests comfort and communication and tends to relate to physical and sexual contact.

We are introduced to this concept of cold right from the beginning of the novel with the cold night and dawn on the morning of the couple's separation. Subsequent images have similar connotations. After María Manuela has left the village, José Damián feels a "sordo río de pena que hacía bajar su caudal helado a través de los canales de la amargura" (p.47). His loneliness on the hacienda, when the other Tzotzil men return home after the harvest is likewise put over in terms of cold: "los vio partir con el alma oprimida en un frígido puño, atenazado por una honda nostalgia de su tribu" (pp.85-86).

The associations of warmth are easy to see in the "calor amoroso que lo satisfacía" (p.35) that María Manuela learned to give José Damián in the early stages of their marriage. On the hacienda, he thinks of her "con su cálido cuerpecillo amoroso" (p.123).

It is the warmth even of the mere presence of Clotilde and her fellow prostitute which offer José Damián the comfort he needs: "Aunque él no consiguiese nada más que estar así, tan cerca de ellas, hubiera querido que la escena continuase por muchas horas, pues la sola proximidad de su tibieza, avimada por aquel inútil y tenue reflejo de la esperanza de ser tomado en cuenta, producíale gozo" (pp.93-94).

The contrast in connotations of heat and cold comes over vividly on the morning of the couple's separation when José Damián wants to summon María Manuela to his bed:

-¿No quedan unas brasitas? -preguntó él, disimulando su propósito.

-Un rescoldito.

-Soplálo . . . , que el frío cala. (p.20)

The contrast of the comfort of the physical contact between the two and the harsh reality of their imminent separation again comes over in terms of warmth and cold when he calls her to lie with him: "Pero el calor íntimo con que quería complementar la complacencia del marido, ya feliz sobre el aliento confortante de la lumbre reanimada, lo vino a humedecer involuntariamente el callado frío de una lágrima" (p.21).

Another positive feature of the best of Rubín's indigenista novels concerns his treatment of potentially costumbrista material. Although in El canto de la grilla Rubín tends to rely, on the whole, on the introduction of ethnological details at a key moment in the action in order to relate them to the plot (e.g. the exogamous marriage; preparations for Mateo's execution), in his other two indigenista novels folkloric material is more functionally integrated.

In La bruma we tend to find a personal, often psychological emphasis taking precedence over the ethnological details. We find this, for example, in Chapter 3, with Lupe's purification ritual after her rape. Although the chapter begins with all those concerned entering the temple, the author then temporarily abandons the details of the ritual to concentrate, instead, on the thoughts which are at this moment preoccupying Antonio Mijares, in particular, about the validity of tribal verdict concerning the issue. The ritual is then introduced as his thoughts tail off and he again becomes aware of events around him.

While the ritual itself is full of ethnological details, it also contains references of subsequent importance. One of these concerns the action shortly afterwards and again highlights Mijares's psychological predicament. The two clay figures in the purification ritual which had represented Antonio and Lupe at their marriage are recalled in the following chapter when Antonio Mijares first beats Lupe. These figures had reminded him of the pleasure of his first love-making with his wife and this memory initially restrains his urge to carry out some sort of punishment of her himself.

Another event which might have been a mere folkloric interlude is Kanamayé's mother's velorio. The typical aspect here, however, is completely subjugated to a portrayal of Kanamayé, who at this point emerges for the first time as a true protagonist. The scene is related very much from his point of view: that of one too young to appreciate religious customs. Consequently, the overall impression given by this chapter is of the anguish suffered by a small child who hopes to see his mother again in

her spiritual form and go with her but finds his hopes cruelly dashed.

In El callado dolor ethnological detail is again functionally integrated, being concerned with symbolism and with controlling the pace of the novel. We see this particularly in Chapter 27, which relates the festivities in San Juan Chamula. As we have already remarked, this follows upon María Manuela's throwing away her husband's knife: an event which provides short-lived hope of averting the tragic conclusion. The description of the fiesta distracts the reader from the previous preoccupations as, indeed, the celebrations distract José Damián: "radiante en la expresión feliz de su cara el júbilo de su disposición a participar en el jolgorio" (p.181). The prime function of the festivities is not folkloric but rather to control the pace of the novel, serving as light relief before the tragic dénouement.

There is also an element of symbolism which makes the typical celebrations directly pertinent to the action. One of the ceremonies described, representing Man's struggle against the wild animal, is the symbolic pursuit of el tigre: a man dressed in a "tiger" skin is pursued until he feigns death. The scene relates to José Damián, who is described very much as a hunted animal: "Anduvo rondando receloso, huraño como un perseguido, acechando . . . " (p.189). When one of the Indians makes insinuating remarks: "P'aquel ladito de Oxchuc . . . han dado en amanecer borreguitas matadas", José Damián's reply unwittingly picks up the symbolism: "Pos andá a cazar la tigre" (p.190). The identification is complete when José Damián's crime becomes generally known and all the Indians pursue him: "Los que traían

la piel de tigre . . . la enarbolaron sobre las cabezas, clamando por el culpable para arrojársela encima y volver dramáticamente real la ceremonia, acabando con él a enardecidos golpes" (p.195).

Another ceremony, representing Man's struggle against the elements, involves setting fire to a heap of straw. A barefoot dance is carried out in which the dancers stamp out the blaze. Just as the tigre ceremony forms an ironic parallel with José Damían's pursuit, for the Indians genuinely intend to kill him while the man dressed in the skin only feigns death, so the fire stamped out by the dancers forms an ironic parallel with the subsequent burning of the couple's dwelling, where María Manuela is unable to stop the flames destroying her home.

While Rubín includes events of a folkloric nature in his novels, it is not merely by such external means that he conveys the Indian identity of his protagonists. Meinhardt's opinion on this matter seems to overlook the key question: he regards Rubín's Indians as "spurious creations", only Indian in their "external aspects" yet amongst these external aspects he includes beliefs.⁶ In fact, Rubín's Indians manifest their indigenous identity in their attitude to life and in their loyalties. It is in these, rather than in details of dress or custom, that they come over as part of an indigenous community, being Indian in the way Alfonso Caso regarded as most important: "Es indio cada individuo que se siente pertenecer a una comunidad indígena".⁷

6. Warren Lee Meinhardt, "The Mexican Indianist Novel: 1910-1960" (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of California, Berkeley, 1965), p.181.

7. La comunidad indígena (Mexico, 1971), p.9. The definition was first given by Caso in a speech at the Segundo Congreso Indigenista Interamericano, held in Cuzco, 10-20 October 1948.

The presentation of Rubín's Indian protagonists brings to our attention a central difficulty which any indigenista author faces, particularly in the novel: how to create vivid fictional beings with developing character but yet ensure that they are still representative of the Indian. There is clearly a tension between creating a figure who is recognizably Indian in his adherence to the often static values of indigenous tradition yet one who manifests a vivid individuality and develops as a character. Carballo complains that Rubín's characters do not become real nor evolve for they are presented deterministically: "Rubín les impide que se manifiesten espontánea y libremente".⁸ He seems not to realize that a certain determinism in their presentation corresponds to the author's wish to put over his characters as typical Indians, bound by traditional values and subject to tribal decree. In fact, Rubín is capable of achieving a balance in his characters, as we shall see, often exploiting the tension between each aspect to good effect.

There is also, as was evident in the early novels, the need to achieve a balance in indigenista fiction between recognizably Indian characteristics and a universal appeal. Many of the early novels erred too greatly on the side of typicality; the experience of the cuento, however, revealed a growing universality, which did not necessarily eliminate Indian identity. Here, again, Rubín enjoys a certain success in attaining a satisfactory balance.

In the figure of José Damián, in El callado dolor, we find

8. Emmanuel Carballo, "Carballo pone punto final a su polémica con Ramón Rubín", La Cultura en México, 3 February 1965, p.18.

a blend of Indian identity, individual personality, and universal preoccupations. From the beginning, the primacy given to Tzotzil ruling characterizes José Damián as a Tzotzil and, indeed, it is this basis of indigenous tradition that sparks off the whole story. Despite his feelings for María Manuela — personal sentiments which give him individuality in the reader's eyes — José Damián must bow to tribal tradition: "El chamula o tzotzil tiene y respeta cánones muy rígidas en cuanto a la función procreativa de su matrimonio, y no lo concibe sin la presencia de los hijos" (p.13). Our first glimpse of his interior is, in fact, precisely to do with the conflict within him of personal sentiments and tribal pressures: "Dentro de su imaginación . . . hervía la amargura de un hondo problema de sentimientos calentada por los fuegos de su orgullosa dignidad indígena" (pp.11-12).

Rodríguez Chicharro complains of a certain anthropological inexactitude here, asserting that separation is not so rigidly enforced as Rubín implies, an element of choice being permitted.⁹ (The evidence of Rosario Castellanos's novel, Oficio de tinieblas, supports this for Pedro and Catalina are not obliged to separate.) Rodríguez Chicharro's criticism of this point in El callado dolor is perhaps over-stated for, if we look at the events of the novel carefully, we see that it was a logical sequence of events that led to the separation, not the sudden imposition of tribal decree from above.

Initially, the force acting on the couple was that of community opinion: "la impresión mortificante del saludo cada vez

9. "La novela indigenista mexicana", pp.106-07.

más frío y de las miradas hostiles que a ella dirigían los vecinos al pasar, como en reproche a su bochornosa infertilidad" (p.14).

Respect for the opinion of one's elders also played a part for it was José Damián's father who advised him to seek separation. The first move to instigate separation was not imposed from above but, rather, came from José Damián who, acting on his father's advice in the face of social pressures deriving from tribal tradition, went to the head of the tribe. Thus we see that it is not the simple matter of enforced separation that Rodríguez Chicharro makes it out to be.

José Damián's predicament is one which can be appreciated in universal terms: the problem of an unwelcome separation from his wife, forced on him by social pressures. His response to her absence is again universally comprehensible. The first night he lies awake, "con la mente atormentada por un razonar pálido y con una mezcla de remordimientos, despecho y miedo al porvenir acongojándole" (p.48). By the fourth day he feels "agobiado y roto" (p.52) and takes to drink (brought to him by his neighbours). The simple practical details of his wife's absence also strike a familiar note: he has to reorganize his life to fit in her chores and his food "le salió deslavada e insípida" (p.51). Again easy to identify with is his worry about María Manuela and his constant sense of her physical absence: "El horror de pensar en lo que hubiera sido de ella y la obsesionante presencia de la estera del rincón vacía" (p.53).

While José Damián's reactions are universally comprehensible, their intensity lends vividness to his portrayal as an individual. There is no doubt about the depth of his sentiments. In the

portrayal of his personal predicament, however, we do not lose sight of his Indian identity because it is precisely the conflict between his feelings as an individual and the pressures of Tzotzil society that create his problem. We see this very clearly, for example, when he finds difficulty in ordering his wife's departure harshly and proudly, as demanded by traditional procedure. At the same time, the fact that he is conscious of such demands reveals his identity as a member of the Tzotzil community.

Meinhardt has objected to Rubín's male Indians being too close to the pelado (as defined by Samuel Ramos), especially in their violent defence of their machismo (p.181). It is true that in Part II José Damián does apparently manifest pelado characteristics, the prime example being his desire to kill sheep in order to "destruir la idea de que esa abstención se debía a flaquezas de su condición masculina" (p.72). However, the identification of not killing sheep with a lack of masculinity was originally "a juicio de sus compañeros" (p.72) and, therefore, not initially attributable to José Damián. It is more likely that José Damián's prime motive was "el deseo de enfrentarse a las mofas de los mestizos" (p.72). Nonetheless, we cannot deny that he does acquire mestizo traits. In addition to his machismo we see this in his confidence in the power of money: "Había adquirido con su roce con los mestizos la infame idea de que el dinero es capaz, por sí solo, de encubrir la bajeza de los peores delitos" (p.123). These traits, however, are an inevitable product of his contact with the mestizos. We can hardly expect José Damián to behave like a member of a Tzotzil community when he is living in a mestizo environment.

It is perhaps more significant as regards Indian identity that even in Part II, under pressure to conform to mestizo values, José Damián's Tzotzil affiliations still show through, revealing the persistence of his Indian attitudes. Even though he longs for a warm embrace and feels a physical need for a woman, he is repulsed by the brazen mestizas who are so unlike the humble Indian women he is accustomed to. When he does actually take up with Clotilde, rather than merely treating her as a prostitute, as the mestizos of this novel do, he sets up house with her: a reaction more typical of indigenous values.

José Damián clearly becomes an unhappy blend: a product of two different environments and cultures — Indian and mestizo — not fully acceptable in either. His vividness as a fictional creation in the latter two parts of the novel comes from the conflict between Indian and mestizo traits in him. In Part I, however, it is the tension between his individual sentiments and his Tzotzil allegiances which bring him to life and this is where we see Rubín's skill in putting over a character who is both clearly Indian yet also a vivid individual with universally understandable problems.

In the case of María Manuela, too, we perceive Rubín's admirable attempt to achieve the optimum balance between individual character, the humility typical of the Indian woman, and the need for a universal appeal. María Manuela's problem, like that of Catalina in Castellanos's Oficio de tinieblas, is one known to women the world over: she is barren. The matter of an enforced separation from one's husband, too, is a universal problem, though the motivation in this case may be local. Her

ill health and final triumph with the birth of a baby are, again, understandable in world terms.

María Manuela is a lesser character in stature than José Damián and does not receive the same psychological emphasis. Nonetheless, Rubín achieves a certain success in individualizing her initially by concentrating on the unusual physiological details of her tuberculose condition and her delayed puberty. He describes her body as "la percha huesosa que constituía su cuerpecillo de criatura desmedrada" (p.27) and refers to the effects of her consumption as she goes about her work: "Arrastrando la tos que borboteaban sus pulmones enfermos y que sacudía a su raquítico busto combándole la espalda" (p.29). As for her retarded puberty, "debido al raquitismo de ella, se presentó entre trastornos orgánicos y un tanto confusa" (p.13). In addition, knowing her husband-to-be was eagerly awaiting marriage, she took her mother's advice, "precipitando su retardada pubertad con artificios" (p.35).

The problem of apparent barrenness is what characterizes María Manuela in the first part of the novel. In addition to the purely external physiological details, we do appreciate her predicament also from a more internal angle as she hears a neighbour singing to her baby a few hours before her separation from José Damián: "La canción le golpeaba las paredes de la cabeza y el llanto del niño tañía con una dulce risa de campana dentro de su corazón" (p.31).

Apart from her apparent sterility, which individualizes her in physical terms and, to a more limited extent, in mental terms, María Manuela is a typical Indian woman, humble and attentive.

Her physical differences and tragic circumstances avoid her seeming type-cast though she is, nevertheless, initially a static character, ruled by humble obedience to her husband and to tribal tradition. Her typical humility is underlined by the author on repeated occasions: "siempre callada y humilde, siempre amorosa y atenta" (p.14); "la expresión humilde y suplicante de la india" (p.20); "la callada humildad de siempre" (p.41); "ella obedeció sumisa" (p.42).

In Part III, however, we see Rubín using a tension between Indian characteristics and personal sentiment in María Manuela, much as he had done with José Damián in Part I. When José Damián returns after supposedly burying the first sheep discovered slaughtered in the village (one of his own) she feels suspicious of him: "María Manuela recibióle ocultando penosamente bajo el fardo de su humildad el tembloroso aliento del recelo" (p.143). Eventually she feels she must act "out of character" for a Tzotzil woman: "Y así, por él y por ella, María Manuela sintió al fin la necesidad de olvidar su sumisión y humildad congénitas, tratando de descubrir e interpretar su secreto" (p.162).

Having discovered José Damián's doings, she is posed with a new problem for her adherence to Tzotzil ways opens up two contradictory courses of action: "Se hallaba ante el dilema de respetar los preceptos morales de la tribu, denunciando ante los mayores las fechorías del marido para que lo castigaran, o de aceptar éstas como una fatalidad siniestra que la obligaba a compartir su situación de esposa del responsable" (p.169). This time the conflict derives purely from her Tzotzil values. In fact, she averts the need to make a decision on these two options

dictated to her by Tzotzil ways by acting on individual impulse: she takes the opportunity to throw away José Damián's knife.

In the final chapter there is again conflict between her individual desires and her Tzotzil duty: she proposes to José Damián that they escape with the child but is told by him, the voice of authority, that her duty is to look after the child and keep it from mestizo influence. On this occasion, her individual desire — to run away with her husband and the baby — clearly remains a belated and vain desire rather than being a serious proposition for it seems from the way José Damián is described that he is either a ghost or simply a product of her imagination, an outlet for her unfulfilled personal aspiration. He is described as "la silueta de una figura humana" which "semejaba más bien una simple sombra que el contorno de una figura corpórea y viviente" and his voice has "un extraño timbre y se escuchaba desconcertantemente vaga y lejana" (p.204). Certainly, María Manuela's final position is that of being bound, as ever, by tribal tradition: she is obliged to return to exile in the mountains due to the stigma of being "la esposa del responsable".

The conflict within María Manuela, both between opposing duties as a Tzotzil woman and between such Indian allegiances and her personal sentiments, gives her character. The fact that she never carries out an action of any great consequence which would go against tribal tradition, however, means that, despite her individuality, her Tzotzil identity is never compromised.

There is a similar balance between individual character and Indian allegiances in Iyali in El canto de la grilla. We see that

she is both headstrong and at the same time bound by indigenous tradition in that she takes the initiative in "proposing" to Mateo but does so by means of an Indian custom: giving him a sash which she has woven and embroidered. On another occasion, determined to intervene to save Mateo yet having been forbidden to speak to any vecino, she uses an unnecessary interpreter, thus managing to ask the priest for help while still obeying her husband's prohibition.

The balance between individual sentiments and Indian outlook is again of interest in Antonio Mijares in La bruma. He is sufficiently Indian in his world-view to be convincing as an indigenous figure but yet is still a vivid individual.

His Indian identity is by no means limited to external aspects. We know little of his dress though a certain amount about his customs. More important, we know of his indigenous mentality in that he is superstitious, believes in the gods and has an implicit respect for tribal decree. It was because of the latter that he initially brought his wife, Lupe, before the Huichol governors, in all confidence that their verdict would be the same as his own. However, it is not, for the governors assert that it is the vecinos who should be punished, not Lupe.

While the sense of amour-propre Antonio Mijares feels is sufficiently universal to be appreciated by the reader, the antagonism between his personal desire and the recommendation of the Huichol authorities gives him individual character. It provokes a psychological tension in him which comes over at Lupe's purification ritual:

Habíalo traído a Santa Catarina el maduro convencimiento de que su mujer iba a sufrir un riguroso castigo. Y no

podía menos de sentirse defraudado con aquella sentencia que dejaba todas sus esperanzas de desquite atendidas a la precaria posibilidad de cobrarles a quienes la atropellaron, la ofensa que sobresaltó su delicadeza. (p.13)

Antonio Mijares still judges the situation in his own way:

Habría sido, pues, mucho más fácil vengar en su mujer la afrenta de que se consideraba víctima la dignidad de Antonio Mijares. Y, estimándolo así, aun después que el concilio la absolvió, continuaba rehuyendo sus miradas y dándole pábulo a un sentimiento rencoroso, con vivos matices de animosidad y de odio insatisfecho. (p.15)

Initially, Antonio Mijares reserves sufficient individual character to reject tribal decree and beats his wife in order to satisfy "el malestar de su vergüenza insatisfecha" (p.18). His individuality is added to at this point by the fact that, not only is his principal desire opposed to the judgement of the Huichol authorities, there is also a conflict in his personal sentiments: he feels both the urge to beat Lupe but is also encouraged to forget such an urge because of his vivid memories of their first love-making, evoked by the clay figures at the ceremony.

Subsequently, there are two major points of development in Antonio Mijares's character and outlook. The first is his acceptance, shortly after this, of the governor's idea of punishing Cuatrodedos instead of Lupe, which leads him in Chapter 5 to pursue the vecino bandit, returning with "el escroto mutilado a su enemigo muerto, que traía como galardón y muestra de su triunfo" (p.23).

The second is his acceptance of being beaten in punishment for beating his wife to death. This constitutes a clear identification with tribal decree for he does not merely go against his own judgement but comes to a realization that his own judgement of what is right in this case coincides with traditional tribal

justice: "Le era casi imprescindible a su conciencia atormentada descargarse, pagando de algún modo los excesos de aquella conducta que iba sospechando injusta y bárbara" (p.44).

It is at this point that we realize the effectiveness of Rubín's use of the conflict between Indian allegiances and individual desires to create a vivid character who is at the same time recognizably Indian for, once Antonio Mijares has accepted complete subjugation to tribal decree, he ceases to function as a character. His psychological predicament gone, he fades as a character and ceases to be of importance in the plot.

Although there is a certain thematic parallelism between the predicament and reactions of Antonio Mijares and Kanamayé, the establishment of Kanamayé as a character does not follow the pattern we see with Antonio Mijares nor, indeed, José Damián of a conflict between Indian allegiances and individual sentiments. Rather, with Kanamayé his character is established on a fairly universal level of personal emotion. The reason for this is partly that Kanamayé's emergence as a character occurs when he is just a child who does not fully understand neither death nor the indigenous concepts that surround it. At his mother's velorio it is his own emotional attachment to his mother and his own child's interpretation of what happens when his mother's spirit returns that dominates, rather than any recognizably Indian outlook.

After his mother's death, it is again love and affection which shape Kanamayé's presentation as a three-dimensional character. Love for Kopitzahui and her sister leads to his first sensation of real happiness: "llegó a encontrar momentos en que realmente pudo sentirse dichoso" (p.53). It is from this love

that his nascent sense of pride springs. Firstly, in general terms, he often sees himself in the role of protector of his sisters. Then, when he is sacrificed and given to Chuy Taemú in payment of the herbalist's fees for the cure of Kopitzahui, Kanamayé begins to feel "ufano de que la niña llegara a deberle la vida" (p.56) and the thought that she will come to thank him becomes a "lisonjera esperanza" (p.58). Betrayal of such affection -- when Kopitzahui fails to come and when the fatherly Chuy Taemú fails to resist the vecinos who have come to take Kanamayé away to a school -- wounds his amour-propre, leading to a bitterness which demands revenge: "aquellas rencorosas amarguras que anhelaban venganza" (p.71). By this stage, Kanamayé's reactions seem much more like those of his father. Nonetheless, we appreciate that they are rooted in emotional matters.

During most of this novel, Rubín cannot afford to evoke too strong a sense of Indian identity in Kanamayé for this would diminish the all-important question of his parentage. However, this does not mean that Kanamayé's Huichol identity is not made evident. There is a growing indication of it in the last part of the novel, occurring, ironically, as Kanamayé tries to convince himself that he is the son of Cuatrodedos.

Even after six years of indoctrination by the vecinos at the Internado, some basic concepts of Huichol life are evident in Kanamayé, revealing him to be Indian in more than external aspects. For example, it is Cuatrodedos's valentía which he sees as his putative father's all-important characteristic. This is not simply because it is the only virtue attributed to the bandit but because it is a redeeming virtue which for the Huichol excuses

all defects: "La temeridad fué la única de las grandes cualidades humanas reconocidas por la primitiva moral de su tribu que ni en las enseñanzas del Internado vecino ni en la concepción de los mestizos y criollos que le fuera dado tratar había perdido su brillo" (p.90).

Kanamayé's Huichol identity is also made evident by his immediate feeling for the Indian world when he comes back into contact with it:

Con la simple presencia de Kopitzahui, todas sus ideas y resentimientos cedían de la obstinación; y empezaba a gravitarle sobre el magín la sospecha de que éste era su mundo, el mundo del que nunca debió salir y contra el cual se había ido tornando, estúpidamente, en enemigo gratuito. (p.96)

A final proof of the depth of Kanamayé's Indian identity is that, like Antonio Mijares after beating his wife to death, he is willing to accept tribal punishment for what he recognizes as his crime: his attempted rape of his half-sister: "poco importaba que lo entregase a los jueces de la tribu para que le hiciera purgar aquel delito que estuvo a punto de cometer con su hermana . . . Por lo menos, le quedaría una humanidad entre la cual buscar equilibrio y acomodo" (p.102).

In addition to these manifestations of Indian identity in a well-established individual character, in Kanamayé's case Rubín also places the question of Indian identity and world-view in a more existential context by revealing Kanamayé, like Ernesto in Arguedas's Los ríos profundos (1958), as one trapped in a spiritual vacuum when deprived by the school of his Indian gods and cultural identification. Thus the author successfully bridges the potential gap between Indian characteristics and universality. Firstly, in relation to Kanamayé and the other Huichol children, Rubín emphasizes how great is the rift between the "civilized" world of the

white man and the pantheistic world of the Huichol Indian:

para ellos, nacidos y criados en el mundo fantasmagórico de una cultura que no reconoce un sólo movimiento humano que no esté presidido por la voluntad de un dios y que los proclamaba hijos predilectos de esas deidades omniscientes, los razonamientos de aquellos apóstatas, modelados conforme al criterio más racional del hombre blanco, carecían de valor y de poder persuasivo. (p.63)

Rubín then reveals that, without this Indian world-view, Kanamayé's moral and spiritual strength ebbs away: "Producto de las enseñanzas laicas del Internado, llevaba además ahora un vacío de recursos supersticiosos acogotándole el ánimo" (p.73). Kanamayé is both helpless and godless, a profound existential predicament: "Los múltiples dioses benévolos, o iracundos pero susceptibles de ser congraciados, de su religión nativa lo habían ido abandonando . . . " (p.73)

Another interesting move towards universality is Rubín's introduction of a sense of the power of destiny. The force of fate on Kanamayé is suggested fairly early in the novel by the occasional lexical hint: "aquel día aciago" (p.61); "sosiego fatalista" (p.64). It is most successfully put over, however, in the presentation of Kanamayé's first real crime: the murder of the itinerant buscador de minas in order to obtain his mule and its trappings. The use of the definite article or a pre-defining adjective in a scene we have no prior knowledge of is an effective and subtle means of implying that all is preordained.

Rubín opens the chapter with: "Tuvo lugar el [my emphasis in this and the following quotations] encuentro" (p.74), followed by "La primera noción de la presencia de su víctima" (p.74) and "divisó la mula" (p.75). Likewise, in the next chapter Kanamayé's idea of killing the man comes over as "asaltóle la ocurrencia" (p.80)

followed by "Sus ideas . . . iban presentándole aquel camino como el único transitable que le dejaba la fatalidad (p.80). The specific mention of fatalidad here confirms the intention to imply the force of destiny in these two chapters.

In El callado dolor, a sense of tragic destiny is also present. Furthermore, the power of Indian tradition is put over in terms equating it with destiny. We find this early in the novel with phrases like: "el fatalismo inapelable de la hermética tradición tribal" (p.12) and "la trágica condición de chamula" (p.11). The title of the novel, too, can be taken in this light. This link between destiny and tribal decree has an important effect on the inter-relationship of Indian allegiance, individual character, and universality. Rather than feel that Rubín's characters are too passive, lacking in individuality in their submission to tribal decree, we tend to pity them for the existential circumstance they suffer, pitted against an implacable force.

On the whole, Rubín produces a successful blend of local Indian, individual, and universal characteristics in his protagonists. There is, however, one feature we might point out which may derive from an over-zealous attempt to put over a vivid character. This is the fact that his male protagonists, with the exception of Mateo in El canto de la grilla, often seem to be pathologically violent. There is some truth in Meinhardt's opinion that, "Rubín's novels about these placid nomads are peopled with degenerate and deranged Indians whose lives are continual debauches of crime and degradation" (p.183).

We are very much reminded by certain of Rubín's male

characters of the distasteful, morbid details evident in López Albújar's much earlier Cuentos andinos (1920). José Damián, introduced to killing sheep at a slaughter-house among the mestizos, finds himself unable to refrain from killing sheep once back amongst his own people. It is a strangely morbid urge for these animals are sacred to the Tzotzil: to kill them would be akin to killing a person. Antonio Mijares cuts Cuatrodedos's genitals from the bandit's corpse to avenge his wife's rape and eventually beats her to death. Kanamayé attempts to rape Kopitzahui and also intends to rob Chuy Taemú of all his belongings, having already killed a vecino for his mule.

It is possible that the extent of degeneracy in these three characters is Rubín's forceful way of putting over to us the detrimental influence of the mestizo on the Indians: José Damián's tendency is provoked by living amongst the mestizos. Antonio Mijares's violence is a direct result of his wife's rape by Cuatrodedos and his fellow bandits. This rape is also the cause of the uncertainty of Kanamayé's parentage while his capture and six years' "éducation" among the mestizos leads to his emulation of Cuatrodedos and his final violence.

Certainly, there is no doubt that Rubín intends strong criticism of the mestizo's influence on the indigenous peoples of Mexico. This is made more than evident at the end of La bruma with Chuy Taemú's comments: "Va pa' seis años que los mismos te llevaron a fuerzas, pa' enseñarte una vida mejor; y 'hora te llevan pa' castigarte por lo que hicieron de ti con sus enseñanzas" (p.104). His answer to Kanamayé's desperate plea as to whether he is Huichol or vecino is an unequivocal condemnation of mestizo influence on

the Indian: "-Lo más pior que podías 'ber sido, m'hijo: un indio avecinado" (p.104). The damage done to José Damián by mestizo "civilization" is clear too and the epigraph to El callado dolor confirms this: "La civilización es como los abismos: resulta fácil resbalar por ella . . . ; pero el que intenta salir una vez que alcanzó el fondo pierde lamentablemente el tiempo".

The degenerate manifestations we see in these three male figures, however, do not seem exclusively intended to put over this message in no uncertain terms. Rather, it is the psychological background to the actions that appears to be of prime interest to Rubín for he expounds this with considerable detail.

The psychological orientation of Rubín's novels is a factor which has distinguished him from many other indigenista writers and has drawn comment, both favourable and otherwise, from various critics. One of Rubín's reviewers notes that he, "No sólo trata de delinear los rasgos esenciales de la vida provinciana sino que se empeña en dar a sus personajes una tercera dimensión: esto es profundidad psicológica".¹⁰ Indeed, Eleanor Ringwald holds that Rubín ranks among the best of Mexico's indigenista writers "both for the descriptive detail and for the psychological study of his characters" (p.225). Rodríguez Chicharro even terms El callado dolor a psychological novel and asserts that "como relato psicológico tiene innegables virtudes".¹¹

Both Meinhardt (p.173) and Schmidt (p.159), however, reject

10. Robert Jay Glickman, "Ramón Rubín: La bruma lo vuelve azul", Filosofía y Letras, UNAM, 29 (1955), 367-70 (p.369).

11. "La novela indigenista mexicana", p.112.

Rubín's psychological analysis because it is based on Freudian concepts and these are not necessarily relevant out of the European middle-class cultural context in which they were developed. Bearing in mind the popular image of Freudian analysis, it is not surprising that both Meinhardt and Schmidt insist on the importance of sexuality in José Damián's conduct in El callado dolor. Meinhardt states that Rubín traces José Damián's problems to their origin in a disturbed sexuality (p.173), a view which is vindicated by authorial comments like the following: "Acaso había . . . en ello algo de la deformación sexual . . . " (p.73). Schmidt insists that José Damián's use of his knife is referred to in "overtly sexual terms" and that his sheep killing is seen as a kind of sexual contest (pp.179-80). The latter's interpretation of José Damián's knife as a phallic symbol is a plausible one: it is seen "formando un bulto bajo el chuje y el fajador" (p.140). Nonetheless, Schmidt does tend to emphasize the phallic connotations to the exclusion of all else. When José Damián first lies with his wife after returning from the lowlands, his knife seems to be more of a symbol of something which has come between them which is detrimental to their relationship: "algo que traía dentro del chuje le dificultaba hallar una posición cómoda" (p.133). Even once José Damián has thrown the knife out onto the floor, María Manuela cannot take her mind off it and concentrate on the attentions of her husband.

Clearly, Rubín wishes to attribute some sexual connotations to José Damián's sheep killing but he does not insist exclusively on these. There are other motives not related to sexual perversion mentioned by Rubín which Meinhardt and Schmidt seem to disregard.

Particularly important is José Damián's sense of misplaced revenge: "un ansia sorda de distraer las miserias de su propia vida haciendo daño por el simple placer vengativo de sentirse dueño y capaz de lastimar a otros" (p.73). It is a highly plausible motive when we remember that, for the Tzotzil, to kill a sheep "hubiera sido tanto o más abominable que matar a un semejante indefenso" (p.60). Once back in the village a further two motives are suggested: a desperation which derives from having to hide the knife of which he is so proud and a desire, born of mestizo influence, to make money in order to return to humiliate the mestizos who had so debased him. These sentiments deriving from a desire for revenge and from frustrated pride are more comparable to those we find in La bruma in Antonio Mijares and Kanamayé.

Without professional psychological training, we cannot really comment on how apt Rubín's Freudian approach to the psychology of these Indians is. What we can assert, nonetheless, from a literary point of view, is that while a psychological focus may sometimes prove valuable, as it does in Castellanos's portrayal of Catalina in Oficio de tinieblas, expressed as it is here it is less satisfactory. The reason is Rubín's authorial stance.

Schmidt admits that Rubín's "authorial interference runs counter to the direction of his artistic efforts" (p.162) while Glickman, too, admits that "la tendencia a analizar los móviles psíquicos de sus figuras novelescas, en contados instantes, ha desviado sus obras de su deseado curso artístico" (p.369). This is particularly the case in El callado dolor where Rubín's remarks on possible motives for José Damián's actions are long and detailed:

Acaso había también en ello algo de la deformación sexual provocada por su prolongado celibato, por sus frecuentes borracheras de aguardiente y chicha y por la procacidad, de índole casi puramente erótica, de sus amigos mestizos, cuyas pláticas versaban siempre sobre temas lúbricos que acicateaban el ansia contenida de mujer que, desde su separación conyugal, llevaba el indígena adentro . . . Porque en los estertores agónicos de los humildes rumiantes encontraba espasmos que despertaban una extraña y atormentada sensualidad en la ya torcida conformación de su temperamento. (p.73)

Rubín's detailed physical description of María Mamuela, likewise, responds to his "penchant for clinical analysis", as Meinhardt aptly calls it (p.173).

In El canto de la grilla we are again conscious of Rubín's indulging in excess psychological analysis for many of the details he provides about Mateo's character early on in the novel are superfluous. Notable examples are: "taciturno y contristado, actitud, por lo demás, habitual en su carácter"¹² and also "el ánimo deprimido y sombrío preponderaba" (p.11). In the case of Mateo's attraction to Iyali, an initially fairly subtle evocation is overshadowed by a sudden extended authorial intervention:

Dos impulsos simultáneos se le inflamaban al calor de la idea.

Uno era el imperativo de la complacencia sexual, despertada por la novedosa ilusión de tener a su merced y sobre el tapexte una muchacha, como el sacerdote lo planteara. El otro, menos exaltado, pero más vital y recóndito, aquel complejo filial castrado por la adversidad que desde niño le pidió con ansia el tibio apoyo de un pecho femenino para reclinar en él sus tradicionales anhelos de ternura materna. (p.56)

In La bruma Rubín is sometimes capable of toning down his authorial presence. For example, his explanation of Antonio Mijares's thoughts during Lupe's purification ritual is attributed to Mijares by being introduced by "Se puso a considerar" (p.17).

12. Ramón Rubín, El canto de la grilla (Guadalajara, Mexico: Altiplano, 1952), p.9. All subsequent references are to this edition.

However, Rubín mars the potentially dramatic evocation of Antonio Mijares's reaction to the discovery of Lúpe's pregnancy by allowing his authorial conjecture to be evident in the use of the conditional tense:

La inevitable pregunta acudiría a su imaginación con violencia soberana: ¿Grávida de quién? . . . ¿Acaso de José de Jesús Ángeles, el Cuatrodedos? . . .
Rechazóla de su lado con un empujón. (p.25)

On the whole, in La bruma there are fewer of the "short authorial essays" Schmidt complains of in El callado dolor (p.161). Rather, a series of recurrent vocabulary traces the development of the two main characters. We see Antonio Mijares's progression through vergüenza, frustración, amargura, and venganza finally to desahogo; Kanamayé's initial happy state (dichoso, ufano, ilusión) gives way — because of the betrayal, as he sees it, of his affection — to recurrent references to amarguras, sentiments described as rencorosos and to a desire for venganza. Nonetheless, lengthy psychological explanation is not absent from La bruma:

Esto traicionaba de modo flagrante sus pretensiones de benefactor y el orgullo de ser útil que le endulzó la existencia y le hizo benigna la fatiga de los muchos quehaceres que tuvo que soportar. Y no podía perdonárselo.

No obstante, la depresión anímica que tal fracaso le trajo, si no acallada, sentíase equilibrar gracias a la compensación que hallaba en el considerable afecto con que iba siendo acogido en el hogar del viejo Taemí. (p.60)

Besides, while there may be a little less authorial intervention on psychological matters in La bruma, this merit is partially offset by the explicit nature of the novel's thesis as stated on the penultimate page by Chuy Taemí: "—Lo más pior que podías 'ber sido, m'hijo: un indio avecivado" (p.104).

One of the effects of constant authorial presence in El callado dolor is that, especially amongst the Indians, there

is little direct speech. The conversation between María Manuela and José Damián (or his ghost) in the last chapter is a notable exception. However, Rubín's imposition on them of a corrupt vernacular Spanish to represent their native tongue at this tragic moment does not give the impression that we are hearing the protagonists directly. Rather, it is again Rubín, putting over the novel's message: "Pero tú tenés que cuidar m'hijo . . . El no debe ir con los ladinos . . . Tú sabés lo que m'hicieron a mí . . . ¡Acordate, María Manuela!" (p.205).

Our main criticism of Rubín's indigenista novels, then, lies in the overt presence of the author, particularly evident when he is concerned to put over a psychological analysis of his protagonists. This diminishes the potential for interiorization of the psychological approach. With Castellanos's Oficio de tinieblas we shall find a less authorial expression of an indigenous psyche. The other possible means of evading the overt presence of the author is, as we have seen in the short story, the use of a first-person Indian narrator. Rubín did not experiment in such a direction. Nonetheless, his significant contribution to indigenista fiction is evident in his use of evocative imagery, his integration of folkloric material, and his blend of Indian, individual, and universal elements in his protagonists. Most especially, however, in a field that has seen much indifference to novelistic structure, the balanced structure and artistic coherence of El callado dolor de los tzotziles and La bruma lo vuelve azul stand out as Rubín's major contribution to the indigenista genre.

CHAPTER IV

FIRST-PERSON INDIAN NARRATIVES

As we have seen from some indigenista cuentos, the first-person Indian narrative is the form, par excellence, which can convey a sense of reliability of lived reality. Everything in indigenista fiction calls for the autobiographical form for the third-person narrative is always open to the suspicion that the author is somehow standing between the reader and the events described, filtering the information and perhaps shaping reality to his own ends. In Rubín's case, as we saw, the authorial presence was particularly evident and proved to be detrimental to the psychological emphasis in his approach to his Indian protagonists.

Dealing, as we are, with a heterogeneous genre where the author does not belong to the indigenous reality he deals with in his works, the use of a first-person Indian narrative clearly poses problems. The cuentos we examined with a first-person Indian narrator are all very short pieces, dealing usually with a single moment of crisis. To maintain the first-person Indian stance for a more extended narrative inevitably makes much greater demands on the non-Indian author. Basing the first-person narrative on the histoire de vie of an Indian informant is the solution to this problem in the three works to be studied in this chapter: Ricardo Pozas's Juan Pérez Jolote (1948) and two works by Carlo Antonio Castro: "Che Ndu: ejidatario chinanteco" (1958) and Los hombres verdaderos (1959).

JUAN PÉREZ JOLOTE

Juan Pérez Jolote (1948), by Ricardo Pozas, is regarded by Marta Portal as marking the beginning of "un nuevo brote indigenista".¹ First published a year before Rubín's El callado dolor de los tzotziles, it marks a radical new departure in indigenista literature. The two major reasons for its importance are that it is a first-person narrative and that it was written by a social anthropologist. Juan Pérez Jolote, a Chamula Indian who had been one of Pozas's informants during some previous field work and consequently knew Pozas quite well, volunteered the story of his life when the two of them were obliged by bad weather to stay indoors. Pozas then realized the potential of Juan's story: "Luego pensé que sería muy interesante presentar en torno a la vida de Juan todos los datos que poseía acerca de las costumbres y las tradiciones del pueblo chamula".²

The informative function is, of course, of prime importance to indigenista writing for the author's principal aim is usually to open the reader's eyes to some aspect of the indigenous world. Juan is an ideal device for, not only could he speak Spanish and thus readily communicate with Pozas, who did not speak the native language, he is also a Chamula who had spent a long time in his youth away from his own cultural milieu. This means that he had to learn about his own culture again when he returned home, a

1. "Narrativa indigenista mexicana de mediados de siglo", Cuadernos Hispanoamericanos, 298 (April 1975), 196-207 (p.196).

2. Elena Poniatowska, "Ricardo Pozas: Juan Pérez Jolote", México en la Cultura, 25 August 1957, p.5.

learning process which can be followed by the reader. Certainly, the novelistic presentation of Juan Pérez Jolote gives the book a wide target audience while Pozas's anthropological study, Chamula: un pueblo indio de los altos de Chiapas (Mexico, 1959), no doubt the planned fruit of his investigations at the time, is of interest only to specialists. Pozas's achievement has undoubtedly been substantial as concerns the presentation of easily assimilated information about the Chamula Indian. As Raúl Chávarri has noted, "El libro, documentado e ilustrado con multitud de datos, detalles y descripciones, constituye un testimonio de la convivencia humana en una zona indígena de México de asombroso valor".³

However, while acknowledging Juan Pérez Jolote's success, we must also remember that it was not the first indigenista novel in Mexico to present anthropological data in a readable novelistic form. Even the costumbrismo of El indio did this. Our concern here reaches deeper than mere readability. There must be a balance between the informative qualities of the book and its literary value.

Pozas's primary intention seems to have been more informative than literary, as his Introduction makes clear: he aspires to give "una pequeña monografía de la cultura chamula" where "Nuestro ejemplo es típico".⁴ The informative concern is supported by the fact that the text was first published as an article

3. "La novela moderna mejicana", Cuadernos Hispanoamericanos, 58, No.173 (May 1964), 367-79 (p.375).

4. Ricardo Pozas A., Juan Pérez Jolote: biografía de un tzotzil, 3rd edition (Mexico: FCE, 1959), p.7. All subsequent references to both Introduction and text are to this edition.

in the periodical, Acta Antropológica. It was not published separately until 1952 and, according to César Rodríguez Chicharro, was not taken notice of in literary criticism for a further couple of years.⁵ Furthermore, Pozas has denied literary aspirations: "Yo no soy hombre de letras".⁶ Not only has he asserted that he feels himself to be "ni escritor ni literato", when asked if literature interested him he even replied, "Casi no", and said that if he had written a valuable literary work it was "sin darme cuenta".⁷

It is perhaps understandable that Pozas should not classify himself as a literary man for he is by no means typical of the writers of his time. Indeed, his book turns away from traditional patterns of literary creation. Nonetheless, Joseph Sommers hastens to point out Pozas's skill as a literary artist: "El papel creador del autor se evidencia tanto en la selección de materia . . . como en el ordenamiento de los sucesos narrados".⁸ Since its second publication in 1952, Juan Pérez Jolote has inspired great literary praise. As César Rodríguez Chicharro suggests, it was only awaiting publication under Letras rather than Antropología for its literary merit to be recognized.⁹

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5. "Acerca de 'Che Ndu, ejidatario chinanteco'", Noema, Xalapa, Mexico (November 1961), 39-47 (p.39).
 6. Horacio Labastida, "Juan Pérez Jolote: realidad de las letras mexicanas", México en la Cultura, 28 December 1952, p.2.
 7. Poniatowska, "Ricardo Pozas", p.5.
 8. "El ciclo de Chiapas: nueva corriente literaria", Cuadernos Americanos, Year XXIII, 133, No.2 (March-April 1964), 246-61 (p.250).
 9. "Acerca de 'Che Ndu'", p.40.

Insofar as Juan Pérez Jolote succeeds as a work of literature and not simply as "una pequeña monografía de la cultura chamula", it does so for two principal reasons. One is its structure, to which we shall return; the other, perhaps more immediately striking, is Pozas's success in working within an extremely narrow pattern of deliberately self-imposed restrictions.

One of these is vocabulary. By confining his account to an autobiographical narration, told in Spanish by a peasant Indian who has had no formal education, Pozas imposes upon himself an abnormally limited medium of expression. The starkness of Juan Pérez Jolote in this respect is a welcome change from the often flowery language of costumbrismo or the detailed interpretative intrusions of Rubín. The only other novel in which we find anything approaching this economy of style is Chávez Camacho's contemporary Cajeme (1948). However, while the style of Cajeme may be pleasantly unrheterical, its author is by no means bound by the kind of limitations Pozas has set himself. Once Juan is chosen as narrator, not a single word can in theory be used (except in reported speech) which would be out of place in his working vocabulary. As Norma Klahn points out, Pozas "Mantiene el tono narrativo del informante con un lenguaje reoriginado, recreado".¹⁰ Only through an analysis of the text do we fully appreciate the extent of this adherence to a medium of expression equivalent to Juan's own.

A summary word count of the text reveals that Pozas has

10. "Juan Pérez Jolote: ¿antropología o ficción?", Texto Crítico, 13 (April-June 1979), 236-41 (p.240).

restricted himself to less than 1,300 words, some of which, besides (e.g. trabajar, trabajo, trabajador; tierra, terrón, terreno; tortilla, tortilleo, tortillear), are very closely related to one another. There are very few abstract nouns or words of any kind which imply concepts or ideas other than of the simplest kind. Although the verb tends to dominate the sentences, in total nouns exceed verbs almost by a ratio of two to one, making up more than 50% of the text, which accounts for its intense concreteness. Adverbs are scarce, as are adjectives and adjectival phrases. There are few subordinate clauses and virtually no comparisons or uses of metaphor to detract from the essential simplicity of the narration. The result is strikingly effective: a text cast in brief, almost staccato sentences organized into short paragraphs.

A characteristic example occurs on page 25:

Todos los días, desde que llegué, iba con mi mamá a traer leña al monte. Una vez fuimos los tres, mi papá, mi mamá y yo, a traer leña; llevábamos una bestia que era muy cimarrona; no se dejaba cargar; yo detenía el lazo de la bestia; pero mi mamá no aguantaba la carga de leña que iba a ponerle encima; entonces mi papá cogió una raja de leña y nos dio con ella. A mi mamá le pegó en la cabeza y la sacó sangre. Volvieron a cargar la bestia, y después de pegarle también a ella, recibió la carga.

There are only 102 words in this paragraph, only one of which (cimarrona) is an adjective, though de leña is an adjectival phrase. As against 12 different nouns, many of which are repeated making a total of 22, there are no fewer than 18 verbs (including auxiliaries and infinitives) of which only 2, traer and iba, are repeated in identical form, the latter used the second time as an auxiliary. What is very noticeable is the extreme predominance of active forms of the verb and the consequent linearity of the

paragraph: "Una vez fuimos . . . entonces mi papá cogió . . . " etc. Only at the end, "después de pegarle también a ella", is this pattern of simple juxtaposition momentarily modified. Yet the paragraph is extremely effective, the elementality of the description corresponding to the brutality of the events themselves, while the slight shift of manner at the end effectively but unobtrusively emphasizes both how systematically the beating is carried out and the way in which it reduces Juan's mother to the level of a pack animal.

This kind of narration is maintained throughout the text, as we can see by examining, for instance, the account of the Revolutionary skirmish (p.38), tranquilly avoiding any extended description of the fighting, or that of the change of village elders (p.83), in which an essentially ritualistic and ceremonial event is presented in the same active fashion as the military operation.

Rodríguez Chicharro holds that the restrictions imposed by adhering to a mode of expression equivalent to Juan's limited Spanish gives the book "escaso valor literario".¹¹ To be sure, it denies the work the more poetic dimension evident in Carlo Antonio Castro's Los hombres verdaderos (1959), another first-person Indian narrative, where a fluent Spanish is used to reflect an especially fluent native Tzeltal speaker. Nonetheless, the recreation of Juan's laconic, oral style gives this narration a gripping immediacy.

In addition to the limited vocabulary Pozas adheres to, he imposes upon himself a second major limitation: an almost total

11. "La novela indigenista mexicana" (unpublished Master's thesis, Mexico: UNAM, Filosofía y Letras, 1959), p.99.

absence of commentary. Thus the technique of the "innocent eye" is thrust to an unusual extreme. Of course, Juan's narration is not totally devoid of commentary in the sense of personal reactions. Without these he would lose his humanity. Nevertheless, they are kept at the most generic level: misery, happiness, fear, pain, desire. His personality tends to be conveyed by his experiences themselves and not by his reflections upon them. His adoption of non-Indian dress (p.28), for example, which would suggest also a change of allegiances, is left unexplained: although his Indian companions make fun of him he makes no reply in explanation or justification.

Pozas's aim in this approach is plainly to preserve a balance between presenting Juan as a human individual with personalized reactions and retaining him in the position of an almost impersonal observer for the purpose of his "monografía". We might wonder, however, if he takes his desire for an impersonal observer a little too far. While, clearly, we would not want the effusive sentimentality of an excess of emotion, on the few occasions we do catch a glimpse of Juan's thoughts and reasoning, our appreciation of him as a character is effectively deepened. Nor does this imply the loss of the simple and unaffected style characteristic of the book:

Los viejos no supieron que me habían vendido sus hijos, o tal vez fueron ellos los que quisieron que me vendieran. Lloré porque iba a quedarme lejos. Los viejos no me pegaban; nunca me regañaron. Quería regresar y seguir viviendo junto a ellos . . . Tal vez me querían; pero eran pobres y no tenían maíz, no hacían milpa, no tenían tierra. Lloré mucho porque no podía volver. ¡Cómo volver, si estaba vendido para que ellos comieran! (p.20)

We might also question whether it is really necessary to

maintain the impersonal stance to the possible detriment of the creation of a personalized individual protagonist. Judging from the other first-person narratives to be studied in this chapter, a greater emotional depth does not necessarily preclude the informative function. Nonetheless, the remarkable objectivity of Juan Pérez Jolote does seem to have a curious spell.

It is worth noting that, despite the degree of objectivity in Juan's presentation, which denies us insight into much of his motivation, he does not remain at the level of an entirely flat character. This is perhaps because certain aspects of his character are hinted at though never followed up. It is never made clear, for example, why Juan's father, contrary to Chamula ways, constantly ill-treats his son. Certainly, the treatment of the pack animal and even of Juan's mother suggests that violence was a part of Sebastián's character. Yet some interesting details are left hanging in the balance. One is the fact that Sebastián never strikes his son when drunk, a point which suggests that his behaviour when sober has a definite and conscious cause. A second is his line of defence when Juan's uncle criticizes his beating of the boy: "Pero si no obedece . . . " (p.25). This is supported by the news from the coffee plantation in Soconusco that Juan has now learned to work: "llegaban a contarle a mi papá que yo ya sabía trabajar, que fuera a la finca a traerme" (p.28). A whole area of Juan's relationship with his father is thus left in the dark, as are later his motives for abandoning native dress or for refusing to testify after the fight at La Flor (p.32). Such unexplained hints add a certain reticence to Juan's self-presentation which implies a depth of character without the details

being given.

There is another consideration which to a certain extent justifies the lack of emotional depth in Juan, at least in the early stages of the novel. With Juan's subsequent reintegration into Chamula culture there is a slight increase in subjectivity. This tends to attribute his greater identity precisely to that reintegration. While this tendency towards increased subjectivity may derive exclusively from Pozas or may have been a feature of Juan's narration that Pozas preserved, its effect is the same: Chamula culture is put over in a favourable light, a subtle means of implying Pozas's rejection of the integration of the Indian into mainstream modern Mexican society.

It is perhaps to counterbalance the reduced emotional content and intentional objectivity of his tale that Pozas introduces a human and existential dimension in the opening and closing paragraphs of the book. Rather than plunging immediately into Juan's autobiography with the first words of the second paragraph, "No sé cuando nací" (p.15), Pozas gives first an expository paragraph which implies the continuity of traditional life throughout the generations, despite the inevitability of death: "Todo está igual que como lo vi cuando era niño; nada ha cambiado" (p.15). In this expository paragraph the death of Juan's father is mentioned and Juan considers his own death: "Cuando yo muera y venga mi ánima . . . " (p.15). While the mention of Juan's father's death relates to the event of his death within the main body of the narrative, this opening paragraph also links to the final paragraph of the novel where Juan's death — of drink, like his father — is imminent: "yo no puedo dejar de tomar. Hace días que ya no como . . .

Así murió mi papá. Pero yo no quiero morirme. Yo quiero vivir" (p.113). The effect of opening and closing comments of this nature gives a profound human frame to the book, not only raising it above being of merely scientific interest but also counter-acting the extreme objectivity characteristic of the main body of the novel.

The artistic frame of the opening and closing paragraphs leads Marta Portal to assert that the whole book is narrated by Juan from "un presente estático" which will be "el de su agonía, pero no lo sospechamos hasta la última frase".¹² This striking effect is clearly a mark of the literary author in Pozas for in real life Pozas read his book to Juan for correction and Juan was alive and well when Pozas presented him with a copy of it.¹³

The above is only a minor example of Pozas's innate literary talent. More significant is his arrangement of the general structure of the work, one of the features that Alí Chumacero considers to have led the book to be considered as "una obra eminentemente literaria".¹⁴ Juan Pérez Jolote may give the appearance of an unstructured narrative and, indeed, this apparent spontaneity is of great importance to the book's impression of oral expression. However, it possesses a symmetry of structure which makes a considerable contribution to its literary status. The book falls into two quite clearly defined parts with a secondary division in the latter of them. The division between

12. "Narrativa indigenista", p.200.

13. Poniatowska, "Ricardo Pozas", p.5.

14. "Rulfo, Pozas, Valadés", México en la Cultura, 29 November 1959, p.5.

Parts I and II, occurring with Juan's return home (p.50), acts as a centre of balance and is marked by double spacing in the text. No typographical division, however, marks the more minor second articulation, though there is a change in direction with Juan's desire to participate in community posts.

Shortly after the book opens, Juan runs away from home. This represents a break with the natural order and leads him to aimless wandering through many different walks of life. As a consequence of his exile in Part I from the traditional pattern of life, Juan suffers ill-treatment, exploitation, and imprisonment and is even absorbed into the forces of the Revolution as mere cannon-fodder. In this downward spiral of subjection he loses not only his liberty but comes close to losing his Indian identity too, speaking Spanish and wearing ladino clothes (or uniform). He even comes to lose his sense of personal authenticity, symbolized, inter alia, by his sexual relationship with an old woman when he is in the army.

In contrast to Part I — the section of the book that seems almost brutally objective — Part II represents a reconciliation with traditional ways. Juan is reintegrated into Chamula life, a fact initially symbolized by his marriage to a Chamula girl, Dominga, and reinforced by his later participation in the Indian politico-religious hierarchy. While his succession of jobs in Part I degraded and alienated him, this service to the community gives him social prestige and a role in life.

Part I is only 29 pages long. Part II, in contrast, totals 52 pages, its first half having 24 and the second, dominated by Juan's series of cargos, having 28. In a sense, there is a certain

three-part balance with Parts I and IIb being of similar length and representing two very different series of "jobs" while Part IIa, covering the initial stages of Juan's reintegration, contains the climax, marked by the marriage. Nevertheless, more important is the two-part thematic symmetry of alienation in Part I as against reintegration in Part II. The greater length of Part II and its much more leisurely pace, being concerned with the natural cycle of birth, marriage, and death and its detailed description of traditional behaviour, is perhaps intended to underline the change in Juan's outlook.

Part I is the section of the novel which has earned Juan Pérez Jolote the term of picaresque, "el Lazarillo de Tormes de los tzotziles".¹⁵ The sense of aimless geographical wanderings is clearly intentional, in contrast to Juan's stability after reintegration. However, despite these wanderings there is a certain sense of unity: although Part I has no real plot the author ensures that Juan is always present, in every paragraph, and he provides this unity.

The reader's interest is kept from flagging in Part I by the rapid pace with different events and scenes following on in quick succession. These themselves are given vitality by a careful balance between narration by the protagonist and direct speech, the latter both integrated into the narration and standing apart:

Las mujeres de los que trabajaban en la finca decían:
"Pobrecito, quién sabe si él lo mató o nomás anda sufriendo",
y me daban pozol para que tomara, pero como estaba amarrado
era como si no tuviera manos, y ellas, con las suyas, me lo
daban en la boca.

15. Portal, "Narrativa indigenista", p.200.

Vinieron los demás y las mujeres me gritaban:

-¡Ay, José, pobrecito, ya te van a llevar! ¡Cómo no lo dijiste claro quién fue! . . . ¡Di cómo empezaron a pelear!

-Cómo voy a decir, si no lo vi.

Se llevaron al muerto, y a mí me llevaron preso. Llegamos a Mapa y allí dormí en la cárcel.

Al otro día, al amanecer, tomamos el camino de Tapachula. Llegamos, y allí quedé en la cárcel. (p.32)

Simple description and direct speech are combined expertly to give vivid flashes of scene and situation. A little earlier, Juan tells of the fight at La Flor amongst some of his companions over a woman. Their argument is plain but graphic:

-Tú, ¡cabrón! -decía uno-, estás pisando a mi mujer.

-Y tú también estás pisando a la mía.

Luego venía el otro y decía:

-Tú también te estás cogiendo a mi mujer.

Y empezaba la riña . . . (p.30)

The resulting fight is described briefly but it is made clear that Juan is the narrator and was present at the time though, true to the objectivity Pozas aspires to maintain, he is not actively involved nor is his immediate reaction of fright uncommon: "De todos modos, se agarraron a machetazos. Las mujeres y yo los mirábamos asustados. Uno quedó muerto y los otros se fueron con las mujeres" (p.30).

The speed with which events are told leaves room for no more than the barest of facts. An example of this brevity is Juan's involvement in the common practice of enganche. We receive all the necessary information to appreciate this practice in a short paragraph which, in addition, refers to Juan himself:

Un día pidió mi papá doce pesos a un habilitador de los que andan enganchando gente para llevarla a trabajar a las fincas. Cuando llegó el día para salir al camino, no lo encontraron, porque estaba emborrachándose, y me llevaron a mí en su lugar, para que desquitara el dinero que él había recibido. (p.24)

Part I of Juan Pérez Jolote, then, owes its literary success

to its variety of content, its rapid pace, and its simple objective approach which, nevertheless, never dispenses with Juan's constant presence. At this stage, however, the book does not yet contribute greatly to revealing Indian reality to the reader. This is because in Part I Juan is not entirely representative of the Chamula Indian.

As an Indian child Juan's situation is so atypical that Pozas feels obliged to comment in a footnote that, "Por regla general, los niños son bien tratados en Chamula; tienen libertad y casi nunca se les golpea. Se tienen con ellos muchas consideraciones, y una paciencia ilimitada para enseñarlos. El caso de Juan Pérez Jolote parece ser una excepción, porque tampoco es frecuente que los niños huyan de su casa" (p.113). Another facet of Juan's life that is unrepresentative of the Chamula is his participation in the Revolution. Pozas also comments in the Introduction on the atypicality of this, "que fue un accidente en su vida" (p.7). However, it was this "accidente" more than anything else which made him aladinado and well-nigh destroyed his Indian identity.

In proportion as Juan becomes more aladinado he becomes less representative of the Chamula. Equally, however, he becomes more suitable as a literary device for unveiling the Indian Weltanschauung to the reader through his subsequent reintegration into Chamula culture. This important consideration must not be forgotten for clearly it offsets the atypicality of Juan in Part I, which contributes little to the book's informative function.

Furthermore, whatever Juan may lose as a representative Indian he gains as a novelesque figure, becoming more individualized

through his subjection to adverse conditions or unusual predicaments. We have seen, for instance, that in the unusual feature of Juan's ill-treatment by his father lies a hint about Juan's character. At this early stage of the novel, covered by Part I, it is more important to create interest in the protagonist than to concentrate on a depiction of Indian reality.

The optimum balance between literary and informative indigenista considerations is difficult to achieve. However, although in the Introduction Pozas seems to wish to have two conflicting features — Juan's typicality and also his novelesque individuality — in the novel itself he has reached an effective compromise. While Indian identity and typicality are perhaps sacrificed in Part I, they give way to the more important initial question of evoking interest in the protagonist, though without going as far as a subjective evocation. Thus Part I establishes the protagonist as a valid device for the subsequent revelation of the Indian world which occurs in Part II.

Part II, which concerns Juan's reintegration, introduces a much slower pace and initially a slight increase in personalization. As soon as Juan arrives home we begin to see him from the inside, though without losing the essential simplicity of the narration. He portrays himself in the predicament of being ill-at-ease in his own home and reveals his reactions and sentiments in this situation. His awkwardness comes over not only in what he recounts but also in the stilted sentences he uses: "Me dieron una silla; me senté. Me les quedé viendo . . . No pude platicar con ellos, ya no podía hablar bien el idioma" (p.52). Although in this Spanish narration he does not speak exactly as he said he did

— "palabras en castilla y palabras en la lengua, porque no podía decirlo todo en la lengua" (p.52) — his words, nevertheless, are notably stilted and simple compared with the more fluid responses of his family:

-Nosotros creíamos que te habías muerto.
-¿Yo?, ¡no! Porque Dios me cuidó; ¡gracias a Dios!
-Gracias a Dios que te volvimos a ver la cara. (p.53)

The initial pages of Part II enable us to appreciate the immense gulf between the aladinado Juan and his native people. (We can, by extension, appreciate the even greater rift between a real ladino and the Indian.) A point that makes the evocation of this gulf particularly vivid is that we see all this through Juan's own reactions and thoughts, simply expressed but nonetheless a direct revelation of a distressing predicament that builds up Juan's character:

Yo estaba triste; ya no sabía vivir como chamula. Y entonces pensé: "¿Para qué vine a mi pueblo? ¿Qué me hizo venir? Si no pude estar aquí cuando era chico . . . Ahora que todo lo veo tan raro, que no puedo hablar como la gente y que se me han olvidado las costumbres . . . ¿qué voy a hacer? . . . Me da vergüenza vestirme como chamula, y si me visto así me veo feo . . . No puedo salir al pueblo; siento que me miran mal, que hablan de mí . . . " (p.54)

His reflections are put over in quick, direct strokes, avoiding a detailed account but giving the main points of his worries, which enhances his stature as a character.

The beginning of Juan's reintegration is expressed almost with a suggestion of rebirth, accompanied by sentiments of fulfillment (gusto; contento) and a sense of comfort evoked in the warmth of the fire:

Y me quedé en la casa, trabajando, oyendo a mi madre hablar la lengua. Y así estuve muchos días, junto a ella, como si hubiera sido un niño. Me daba gusto pensar que ya tenía yo mamá otra vez. Y empecé a sentirme de nuevo

contento, junto al calor de la lumbre que ardía en medio de la casa. (p.55)

As we have already suggested, it is fitting that a slight increase in personalization should be allowed in Part II as Juan's reintegration begins to restore his personal authenticity after the degradation and alienation he suffered in Part I. Furthermore, it is perhaps necessary to add a little more personal interest here as, compared to Part I, the concentration of events is greatly reduced. Added personalization helps to compensate for this reduction in events.

Much of the first half of Part II is taken up by events relating to Juan's union with Dominga. The whole process, from pedida to their establishment as a couple in the village, covers sixteen pages (pp.60-78). This length makes the event stand out, as it should for it marks the first real proof of Juan's reintegration and marks a climax in the novel.

The more detailed and lengthy narration here, compared with Part I, succeeds in giving the impression of Juan's more settled leisurely life in contrast to that time of chaos. Nevertheless, Pozas does not risk too leisurely a pace in order not to lose interest. These pages are full of direct speech, which increases the pace and diminishes the density of the text. It also has an immediacy and vividness which might have been sacrificed by a reported narrative. Here, even points which could easily have been expressed in reported speech are put over vividly in direct speech:

Cuando recibieron el trago, me dijeron.

-Espera hasta el otro mes; no creas que te vas a llevar ya a tu mujer.

-Está bien -dijimos nosotros. (p.64)

There is action too, and interaction between various characters. Also the presence of our protagonist throughout relates the entire matter directly to him.

We still notice, however, that although Pozas allows Juan a little more situational personal reaction in the first half of Part II than he shows in Part I, he is still not permitted to steal the limelight. Once he is allowed to sleep with Dominga, for example, he does not immediately begin to fulfil his expected sexual role as husband. Dominga rejects his advances, "porque están despiertos mis papás" (p.73). Even once he does get to consummate the marriage — the description of which is again typical of the stark style established in Part I — a few references to Juan's parents placed in the middle of the description interrupts Juan's domination of the scene:

Nosotros fuimos a acostarnos. Nos quitamos los vestidos; hora sí dormiríamos encuerados. Ella se desnudó completamente, sin que yo le dijera. Nos tapamos. Ella me acariciaba y yo también la acariciaba.

Acabaron de cenar mis padres; alistaron sus camas y se acostaron a dormir.

-Duérmanse, que pasen buena noche -dijeron los viejos.

-Buenas noches -contestamos.

Y apagaron la luz.

Yo no le dije nada a Dominga, ella se dejó, se entregó sin decirme nada; lo hicimos despacio . . . para no hacer ruido, para que no despertaran los viejos. Esa noche le subí tres veces, una vez cada hora. (p.75)

Clearly, Pozas is still trying to maintain maximum objectivity for informative purposes. At this point, he is perhaps overzealous in his endeavour. A greater personalization and sense of fulfilment could have enhanced this moment, symbolic of personal reunion for Juan with Chamula life.

In Part II, even before the marriage, we begin to see Pozas's use of Juan's reintegration as a device to explain points of

interest in Chamula culture. This is highly effective at the Day of the Dead celebrations partly because this is its first use and partly because Pozas makes sure that Juan's presence is evident. The latter is achieved through Juan's direct participation — though always acting in company in order to avoid his stealing the limelight — and by the narration of the scene in the first person, both singular and plural: "fui con mi padre al panteón, limpiamos las yerbas de las tumbas . . . " (p.55); "Yo me quedé en la casa nueva donde no iría ninguna ánima. Teníamos allí un garrafón de aguardiente. Conmigo estaban mis hermanos y ellos se durmieron pronto" (p.56). Even when Juan is not actively participating, his use of personal pronouns establishes his involvement with the others present: "Uno de mis hermanos" (p.55); "mi madre"; "mi padre" (p.56).

An interesting point at this juncture is that here occurs the only instance of a legend interpolated into the narrative (pp.56 & 58). Told by one of the old men who accompanies Juan's father on All Saints' Day, it gives a direct insight into the beliefs of the Chamulas with respect to the reason for death and what happens after it. Its subject matter is of direct relevance to the existential comments of the opening and closing paragraphs and this reinforces both their significance and the legend's own in relation to them. In style it varies little from the rest of the narrative — an oral narration of short paragraphs and simple sentences incorporating some direct speech — and so fits in with the rest of the book. While this single legend does not imply an importance of myth on the scale of Castro's Los hombres verdaderos, it constitutes an interesting foretaste of the different approach

of Castro's novel.

The first section of Part II, then, incorporates sufficient details about the Day of the Dead, the pedida, and the marriage to satisfy the anthropologist in Pozas but also maintains the interest in Juan himself through never losing sight of him and even occasionally giving an insight into the workings of his mind. The pace and immediacy given by the high proportion of direct speech also ensures the reader's interest despite the great reduction in events compared to Part I. The end of this half of Part II is marked by Juan's sense of being at ease in his home village: "Ya me sentía contento en mi pueblo" (p.78). The initial stages of his reintegration are complete.

As the narrative slips into the second half of Part II it turns in a different direction, marked by Juan's desire to receive some position of responsibility in the politico-religious hierarchy of his village. Here, then, begins the series of Juan's appointments which forms the theme of most of the second half of Part II.

The pace slows down further and, while it could be argued that this is to reflect Juan's now settled position in the village, the reduction of events and the more than leisurely pace risk the book's becoming tedious. Here we have an unquestionably folkloric emphasis where Juan's presence is often allowed to slip in favour of the presentation of anthropological detail. Of particular note in this respect are Juan's many cargos.

After Juan thinks of being primer mayor, considers how to be chosen, and gives his promise to be primer mayor, we are told in general terms what is the procedure when new appointments are

received. The nature of the narration as general information is clear: "Las varas y los bastones deben estar limpios" (p.81); "les dio trago"; "Le entregó el bastón" (p.84). Only one sentence in over three pages (pp.81-86) refers to Juan himself and this, besides, sets him apart from these generalizations: "Yo había lavado mi vara en mi casa con mi mujer y mi padre, porque los mayores lavan sus varas aparte" (p.83). Juan's own appointment is covered, after this general information, in a short paragraph: "Cuando me llevaron a mí . . . " (p.86). Over the next four and a half pages general information on the task of the mayores is given and Juan tells some anecdotes. Although lively, these have little emphasis, if any, on the part Juan himself played. In this instance, the folkloric generalities certainly outweigh the concentration on our protagonist.

Juan's next position (after his father's death and his son's birth) is that of fiscal: "El fiscal tiene que saber cuándo son todas las fiestas" (p.98). Only a couple of paragraphs relate his appointment; then it is explained to Juan who all the saints are: "Uno de los más viejos del pueblo . . . me llevó a la iglesia y me enseñó lo que eran todos los santos" (p.98). Initially, this information is clearly intended for Juan, beginning with: "-Éste me dijo [my emphasis], señalando a San Sebastián- es . . . " (p.98). However, there is only one more passing reference to Juan (a brief "me dijo") during three further pages of information. The account is eventually brought to a close with a long-needed reminder of Juan's supposed presence: "Y así conocí a los santos que están en la iglesia de mi pueblo" (p.102). By this time, unfortunately, his presence already risks having been forgotten.

Furthermore, nothing else is said about Juan's position as fiscal. Rather, the narration immediately proceeds to relate another appointment of folkloric interest: that of hábito.

The position of hábito, Juan's third cargo, poses the question of his speech at the carnival. This at least provides the minimum personal interest necessary for the autobiographical mode. Immediately after this, however, we can follow the depersonalization of the narrative from the first person singular to first person plural and then to third person:

yo fui con la gente de mi barrio, todos íbamos a la casa del nuevo pasión del barrio de San Juan.

Los mash dieron las tres vueltas, corriendo . . . (p.105)

Another one and a half pages are filled with general description before Juan himself is mentioned again: "Toda la noche fue de baile y alegría; yo dormí un poco, porque al otro día tenía que hablar otra vez" (p.107).

In the relation of these three cargos it is evident that Pozas does tend to eclipse Juan's presence by too much general description. His careful control of Juan's domination of the scene in order to maintain his chosen objective approach is permissible while Juan is clearly present but the complete omission of any hint of Juan's presence for extended periods runs counter to the autobiographical mode and proves detrimental to the novel on various occasions.

In Part I Juan may not have been allowed more than the most generic of reactions but at least his presence was evident. In the earlier half of Part II Juan's presence was still constant and there was even a slight increase in personal interest. In the

latter half of Part II, however, Pozas gives rein to his desire to provide anthropological data in the form of folkloric events and often lets Juan's essential presence slip.

Rodríguez Chicharro complains that Pozas's desire to produce "una pequeña monografía de la cultura chamula" caused him to make his protagonist take part in things that the real-life Juan did not do.¹⁶ In fact, Pozas himself explains in the nota editorial to the original publication of the text in Acta Antropológica (the only appearance of this comment) that "se juzgó conveniente incorporar en el texto algunas descripciones no proporcionadas por el biografiado, con el fin de redondear el relato y dar una visión más clara de la vida y costumbres de estos indios".¹⁷

We also remember from Poniatowska's interview with Pozas his realization of the possibilities inherent in Juan's story: "sería muy interesante presentar en torno a la vida de Juan todos los datos que poseía acerca de las costumbres y las tradiciones del pueblo chamula". There is no real objection to Pozas's making Juan take part in extra activities in order to expand the informative scope of the book provided he manages to integrate Juan into the presentation of these. Unfortunately, some doubt remains about Pozas's success in fulfilling this proviso.

A revealing point is that Juan himself (the man, not the figure in the book) was clearly conscious of the anthropological slant of the book for, when Pozas presented him with a published copy he saw it not as his personal biography, which it purports

16. "La novela indigenista mexicana", p.99.

17. Klahn, p.236.

to be, but as a general study: "se paseaba por dondequiera, enseñándoselo a la gente y diciendo que ése era el libro que decía de las cosas de todo el pueblo".¹⁸

Certainly, in the latter half of Part II there is room for criticism of Pozas's inclusion of too much extraneous folklore. However, such criticism is not applicable to the whole of Part IIb. At Juan's father's burial, which occurs after the first cargo though is linked in its concern with the opening and closing paragraphs of the book, anthropological details are successfully combined with action and Juan's constant presence. Traditional customs and beliefs emerge but they are not gratuitous. Any explanatory generalization is brief and directly relevant to the moment:

Cuando los hombres mueren ya viejos, sus ánimas se cansan en el viaje y hay que darles mucho de beber. Mi tía, María Pérez Jolote, le daba agua a mi padre cada vez que descansaban; levantaban la tapa de la caja y ella, con una hoja de laurel, tomaba el agua del huacal y le ponía tres chorritos en su boca. (p.93)

Alternatively, Pozas avoids any kind of commentary and makes the beliefs and customs synonymous with the action:

Cuando estuvimos cerca del panteón, mi tío Marcos cogió la red que yo llevaba, donde iban las cosas para el camino, sacó el cestito donde estaba el huacal y de él sacó los ataditos del bastimento y los empezó a contar: eran doce bolitas de tortilla y tres bolitas de pozol. Levantó la tapa de la caja y el chamarro negro con que iba vestido mi padre, y debajo puso, en el lado derecho, los ataditos con el pozol y las tortillas, y le dijo: "Esto es para que comas en tu viaje, es tuyo, guardalo bien, no vayas a dejar que te lo quiten". Luego contó los tres pesos que había en el cestito y se los metió entre su camisa, y le dijo: "Aquí tienes para que tengas la paga para tu chicha, para tus limas y guineos, para que tengas que comer por el camino, para que puedas comprar lo que quiera tu corazón". (p.93)

18. Poniatowska, "Ricardo Pozas", p.5.

The simple conversational tone of the passage brings the reader close to the action. Although Juan is kept out of the limelight of full participation, he is constantly present during the scene. The occasional first-person plural verb ensures that this is appreciated while the possessive pronoun and statement of relationship in "mi tía" and "mi tío" establishes Juan's identification with the people who carry out the action of the scene.

The birth of Juan and Dominga's baby, following this, also avoids excess anthropological information:

Cuando llegó la hora, Dominga se puso de rodillas sobre un petate, yo me senté en una silla frente a ella, y abrí mis piernas, ella puso su barriga entre mis rodillas, y Pascuala, sentada detrás de Dominga, esperaba al niño. Yo apretaba su vientre con mis rodillas, cuando ella pujaba y abría más sus piernas para que saliera el niño, y Pascuala ayudaba jalándolo; cuando lo tuvo en sus manos, Dominga se acurrucó para esperar la placenta, y cuando salió, Pascuala amarró el ombligo con una pita y lo cortó con las tijeras de los carneros. Mientras le daban a Dominga un huacal con agua de chile, caliente, fui a enterrar la placenta cerca de la casa. Yo estaba contento porque el hijo que tenía era varón. (p.97)

Traditional customs — for example, the agua de chile and the burial of the placenta near the house — are mentioned in a matter-of-fact manner which avoids their seeming exotic. Juan is not only present but actively participating. While practical details dominate, emotion on Juan's part is briefly brought in at the end once the urgent practicalities have been attended to. In contrast to the relation of Juan's cargos, this event and the burial of Juan's father are not only of anthropological interest but contribute to the universal human expression of the book.

The principal difficulty which arises on account of folkloric material is its successful presentation. It must be artistically integrated, not merely present as anthropological data

per se, as tends to be the case with Juan's cargos. The inclusion in some degree of his cargos is, of course, structurally important in that they reveal both Juan's desire for complete reintegration and his fulfilment in such service to the community. However, a reduction in the number of pages where Juan's presence is eclipsed by folkloric description might have proved beneficial to the novel. Indeed, this might enhance the two-part structure for while Part II would still be long enough to give the leisurely impression of Juan's settling down, the major turning point, Juan's return home, would fall more centrally. In line with the existential note of the opening and closing paragraphs of the book, the anthropological details of Part II would be concentrated on constants of universal human interest as well as anthropological interest: birth, marriage, and death.

We noted in our Introduction (p.4) that Pozas views with growing scepticism the Mexican ideal of national integration and the absorption of the indigenous peoples into the mainstream of Mexican society. Clearly, he sympathized with the moral inherent in Juan's tale of alienation and rediscovery. However, perhaps in order to antidote a potentially anti-progressive note in his presentation of Juan's return to a static, traditional pattern of life, outside the mainstream of national society, as a return to fundamentally positive values, Pozas does add a note of criticism. At the end of the book, Juan is dying, just as his father did before him, of alcoholism: the traditional ritual "Uso del aguar-diente como bebida en todas sus relaciones sociales, políticas y religiosas" (Introduction, p.12). Since we know that Juan was

presented with a copy of the book it is evident that it is Pozas who added this note of criticism.

Subsequent first-person Indian narratives in the indigenista genre would seem to share this implied rejection of Juan's introverted position. However, this is not, apparently, an attitude embroidered on by the non-Indian author. In both "Che Ndu" and Los hombres verdaderos the first-person Indian protagonist is receptive to the advantages national society can offer but, particularly in the case of Los hombres verdaderos, this does not imply relinquishing his own cultural identity. The process of concientización we find in the protagonist of Los hombres verdaderos is accompanied by a progressive outlook and an optimism which Pozas, in his scepticism, does not share.

"CHE NDU"

Before proceeding to the study of Carlo Antonio Castro's Los hombres verdaderos (1959), it is of relevance briefly to consider his earlier and much shorter narrative: "Che Ndu: ejidatario chinanteco" (1958). Although only half the length of Juan Pérez Jolote and a little shorter than Lombardo de Caso's La culebra tapó el río (some 11,500 words in contrast to the latter's 18,000) this work is still much longer than any of the cuentos with a first-person Indian narrator. Like the other two books in the present chapter, it is a full histoire de vie. While its protagonist's willingness to collaborate with national society marks a parallel with the conclusion of Los hombres verdaderos, "Che Ndu" also offers some interesting comparisons and contrasts with Juan Pérez Jolote.

"Che Ndu", like Juan Pérez Jolote, is the supposed autobiography of a bilingual Indian who confided his life-story in Spanish to the author. Like Juan, Che Ndu is an old Indian looking back on a life which has been influenced by the mestizo world. Like Pozas's tale, this story was published in a periodical, though in this case not one with a specifically anthropological bias. The more literary affiliations of Castro are clear to see. Whereas Pozas spends several pages expounding the socio-economic and politico-religious details of Chamula life, and annotates the following text with ninety-two footnotes, Castro has confidence in the powers of his literature to put over all necessary information and closes his brief half-page Introduction with the words: "escuche el lector las palabras de nuestro amigo . . . ".¹⁹ Nonetheless, Castro's concern here does seem to have been informative for he asserts in the Introduction that "Che Ndu" is "una contribución parcial al conocimiento del grupo indígena chinanteco a través de una historia de vida" (p.401).

Structural similarities between "Che Ndu" and Juan Pérez Jolote are also evident, despite the division of the former, unlike Pozas's narrative, into short chapters. After a brief expository piece (four paragraphs in the case of "Che Ndu") we perceive a two-part structure much like that of Juan Pérez Jolote. Both narratives have a short first part, occupying about one third of the text, in which the protagonist is reduced to a state of

19. Carlo Antonio Castro, "Che Ndu: ejidatario chinanteco", La Palabra y el Hombre, Xalapa, Mexico, no.8 (October-December 1958), 401-26. All subsequent references both to text and Introduction are to this edition.

degradation: Juan loses his Indian identity and personal authenticity; Che Ndu suffers moral degradation. A comparable moment to the centre of balance of Juan's homecoming is Che's establishment as a settled adult at the end of Chapter 5. The second part reveals the protagonist, like Juan, achieving a stability which includes married life and service to the community.

A contrasting feature to Juan Pérez Jolote is that "Che Ndu" includes only a minimum of folkloric details. The velorio he organizes upon his mother's death does not receive a folkloric emphasis. Unlike Juan, Che was not a partial newcomer to his own culture and such details would be regarded by him as commonplace. A few more details — though scarcely folkloric — are given about the pedida for his first wife and about their marriage ceremony for this is a new experience for the young Che Ndu. In the case of his second wife it is clear that he takes for granted a knowledge of the customs: "Empezó entonces el pago de ropa y comida; no hubo enojo de parte de nadie y todo se arregló" (p.412).

Perhaps more akin to Pozas's problem of integrating material of anthropological interest is the integration of events with Che Ndu's visit to Mexico City, occurring, like Juan's cargos, at the height of his political career. The visit to Mexico City is a potentially tedious matter for the reader because it deals with events and people related to that occasion only. However, its division into several chapters breaks it up while personal interest is added by means of various anecdotes where Che Ndu is involved to a degree Juan was not in the anecdotes he told when made primer mayor: he listens to and sees gringos, comments on the physical appearance of the Chinese, marvels at the Piedra del

Sol and the Lagunilla market, and is nearly persuaded to take a job as a barber. Furthermore, like Pozas in his presentation of the pedida and marriage, Castro makes judicious use here of direct speech: the higher proportion of direct speech here than elsewhere in the story makes the episode livelier and helps to avoid the narrative flagging at this point.

While in general structure and in the difficulties posed by integrating informative material "Che Ndu" and Juan Pérez Jolote have a certain amount in common, their narrative point of view is very different, despite both being first-person Indian narratives by old men looking back on their lives. Because there is so little commentary in Juan's story his narration comes over vividly from an undefined moment, seemingly close to the time of action. Che Ndu's narration, in contrast, is full of retrospective commentary which defines the narrative as that of a man of advanced years. This does not, however, diminish the vividness of what he recalls from his youth, as we can see from the following example where adult commentary and re-creation of a moment in his youth are juxtaposed:

Yo nada más vagaba por las calles; me bañaba en el río con varios amiguitos. Pescábamos con anzuelo y cordel, usando lombrices pequeñas como carnada y agarrando, principalmente, guabinas y mojarras. Una vez íbamos atravesando el agua; había corriente y yo quería nadar, pero no aguantaba; iba con la ropa en la mano, pero, como estaba tan fuerte el movimiento, solté mis trapos y . . . ¡se los llevó el río! Más que por ellos lloré pensando en que mis padres me iban a pegar, pero sólo recibí una buena regañada. Amiguitos que yo tenía entonces, todos ya difuntos ahora, eran Alfonso y Cándido Cueva, Maclovio Francisco y otros. (p.403)

Such duality reveals a very different line of approach to that of Pozas's endeavour to maintain an objective stance. Pozas dispenses with commentary and personal depth on the whole to good

effect, creating a stark narrative which is curiously gripping. Castro's protagonist gives a more personalized and emotional self-presentation which creates a greater impression of his character.

The death of his wife and his child's death provoke reactions in Che which build up his character in the first part of the narrative whereas Pozas's narration tended to rely on Juan's initial atypicality to create him as a novelesque figure. These deaths are narrated in Chapter 3 of "Che Ndu", a chapter whose greater length suggests its importance in the matter of character creation. First we see the effect on him of the death of his wife: "De ahí en vista de que no tenía ni quién, mi sentido quedó en vano, atravesado; no quería ni trabajar por el sentimiento de la muerte de mi mujer" (p.409). Shortly afterwards, at the end of the chapter, he comments on his child's death with a simple but effective sentence which reveals the pathos of the moment without incurring sentimentality: "se puso tieso, de una sola pieza las quijadas y el cuerpo" (p.410).

In order to build up Che's character further, Chapter 4 expands on these events in retrospect, providing the kind of commentary that is totally absent from Juan Pérez Jolote. With regard to the child, for instance, his delight at its being a boy may be a reaction shared by Juan. What follows, however, allows us to gain an impression of Che Ndu from the inside, with all his emotional reaction: "Yo estaba muy contento porque el niño era varoncito; pensaba ponerlo en la escuela y, después, que fuera mi compañero en el trabajo. Al morir el niño quedé mal por completo. No iba ya nunca a la milpa" (p.410). There is a brevity of expression here, almost reminiscent of Juan Pérez Jolote, which

avoids sentimentality. Our penetration of Che's interior being, however, is much greater than that of Juan's.

Along with the more emotional, personalized approach, we find a more universal, human dimension than in Juan Pérez Jolote. The series of ill fortune which is alternated with Che Ndu's work and emerges in Chapters 8 (fire), 13 (flood), and 15 (illness) casts him in the role of a toy of destiny. He reveals an awareness at several moments throughout the narration of the fragility of existence. After the great fire, for example, we find the following reflection:

Así está trabajando el hombre cuando lo detiene lo que menos se imagina. Una bolita de lumbre, como dicen, no es nada, pero creo que tienen más fuerza que esas que pasan por el cielo y que los viejos de antes decían que eran brujos persiguiéndose. (p.415)

The result is that in "Che Ndu" we have a more universal interpretation of indigenismo, telling a personalized story of life's struggle in a marginal community with reference to matters of world-wide significance: life, death, work, love, hopes and fears, success and failure, illusions and disillusionment.

Furthermore, rather than feeling a sense of compassion for a pitiful Juan, dying of drink, both compassion and admiration are evoked for Che Ndu for he has been established as a profound character who has faced the hardships of life with fortitude.

In contrast to Juan's inverted final position, we note that Che is aware of how the national society can help him. He takes advantage of the ejido system, becoming an ejidatario and acting as a link between his people and the national leaders; he is willing to accept loans from those richer than himself in order to sow seed; he is ready to accept that his village benefited

from government aid after the great fire; he is proud of his family being bilingual despite almost no schooling: "Pero todos nosotros hablamos la castilla y todos hablamos también la idioma" (p.425). In the last chapter we see that he is even up to date with recent scientific advances and willing to take advantage of these: "¡Ya noto que hay inyecciones para la peste!: así no será muy peligroso criar animales" (p.425).

In fact, Che Ndu, much more so than Juan, is the "indio que anuncia un hombre nuevo" that Norma Klahn sees in Juan Pérez Jolote (p.241). It is scarcely true that Juan, as she asserts, "No acepta morir como alcohólico como sus antepasados" (p.241). He may not wish to die but he makes no move to resist death. Che Ndu, in contrast, works on making new plans in defiance of death.

Considering that "Che Ndu" offers many of the positive features of Juan Pérez Jolote and, in addition, a greater personal and existential depth than Pozas's publication, it is perhaps surprising that it has not received greater critical attention. Indeed, only one critic — César Rodríguez Chicharro — grants it significant mention within the indigenista genre.²⁰ We can only conclude that the reason for such neglect is that, unlike Pozas's novel, it was never brought out of obscurity by being published separately as a book.

20. "La novela indigenista mexicana", pp.186-193.

LOS HOMBRES VERDADEROS

Carlo Antonio Castro's other indigenista narration, Los hombres verdaderos (1959), is, in a sense, much more of a novel than the other two first-person narratives studied in this chapter. As D.L. Schmidt observes, judging it alongside Juan Pérez Jolote, Castro "achieves through fiction nearly the same thing that Pozas does in his anthropological study".²¹ Although it is based loosely on an histoire de vie, there is no insistence in Los hombres verdaderos on the informative function. Indeed, the book is subtitled novela and published in the series, Ficción de la Universidad Veracruzana, giving us, as Joseph Sommers points out, "la clave de su mentalidad".²² Furthermore, it is based on material which the author collected in the Tzeltal language which necessarily implies a considerable degree of re-creation on the part of the author.

A narrative which incorporates four major Indian legends and a quantity of Tzeltal beliefs and vocabulary in its presentation of the indigenous cosmovisión, Los hombres verdaderos would seem to be very much a novela impura. Nonetheless, it has a unity which springs from a central theme -- that of growing awareness and learning -- which culminates in the narrator's final stance in the face of the modern mestizo world around him.

We see the narrator grow up within his culture, while learning also about the surrounding mestizo world, from the age

21. "Changing Narrative Techniques in the Mexican indigenista Novel" (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Kansas, 1972), p.192.

22. "El ciclo de Chiapas", p.251.

of four to that of a young married man. The fact that the central chapters take place in a school emphasizes the importance of the learning process, though by no means all the protagonist learns is through formal education. The culmination of the narrator's awareness occurs at the close of the book when he reaches a sense of concientización del indio in the face of modern culture. The learning process thus forms a constant line of development through to this final climax, the only exception being a suitably placed anticlimax just before the end.

Clearly, Los hombres verdaderos is a species of Bildungsroman. By using this literary form — one of the mainstays of the Western novel — Castro places his indigenista novel very much in the mainstream of the Western concept of the Novel, despite the potential "impurities" which derive from its indigenista nature. Paradoxically, it is this Western form of the Bildungsroman which enables Castro to penetrate the Indian world-view so fully for the protagonist's growing awareness and experience frequently concern his own culture and the status of the Indian in Mexican society as well as his own more personal experiences. In addition, Castro audaciously fuses Tzeltal oral tradition in the form of folk tales into his modern literary form of the Bildungsroman. These offer us a direct insight into the Tzeltal outlook while still forming part of the protagonist's experience of life and contributing towards his final concientización.

Within the general development of the theme of growing awareness and learning the sixteen chapters of the book fall into four parts, unspecified by textual division: Chapters 1-4; 5-7; 8-12; 13-16. The articulation between each part or section marks

a slight change of direction within the bounds of the narrator's growing experience. A detailed examination of these parts will reveal the integration of the different sources of learning which produce the theme: traditional knowledge, personal experience, and formal education amongst the ladinos. It will also bring out the changing emphasis between these sources from section to section.

The first chapter is a suitable exposition for the development of the narrator's awareness to come. The arresting opening words, "Cuando supe pensar",²³ not only introduce without further ado both the protagonist and the autobiographical mode; their emphasis on pensar also establishes the central question of the narrator's awareness.

His first knowledge, contained in the opening eighteen lines, is of the sun, nuestro Señor, the moon, nuestra Madre Divina, and the stars. The nature of this first knowledge — the traditional cosmovisión learned from his elders, his parents and grandfather — establishes the emphasis of the initial four chapters which constitute the first section. This initial emphasis is, of course, also of key importance in the crystallization of the narrator's final stance.

After these opening lines a note more of personal observation is introduced with, "Entonces vi que mi padre sabía pulsar" (p.11). His mother's subsequent description of the volcano she witnessed as a child reasserts the place of knowledge passed down by one's elders. Towards the end of the chapter the learning process is

23. Carlo Antonio Castro, Los hombres verdaderos (Xalapa: Universidad Veracruzana, 1959), p.11. All subsequent references are to this edition.

set in the context of a whole group of young people, his friends, all "deseosos de aprender y de enseñar" (p.16). The anecdote told by the eldest of el venado y la mujer, which the others do not have the sexual awareness to understand, foreshadows an area of the protagonist's experience which will be dealt with at a later stage.

At the close of this initial chapter, representative of the novel as a whole in its incorporation of everyday elements, anecdotes, and snippets of the protagonist's life-story, the final lines restate the theme and the importance of traditional learning along with a reminder of the close relationship of the Tzeltal Indian with the surrounding natural world:

íbamos acercándonos a la tierra, conociéndola, siempre nueva y con vértigo, y acercándonos también a los que estaban sobre ella, hombres, animales, plantas; moviéndonos con cada otra palabra, con cada idea recién venida, recién bebida. Uno a uno nos hacíamos parte de la voz de padres y de abuelos, de tíos paternos y de tíos maternos.

Y nuestras lenguas se aproximaban más al mundo. (p.20)

Further traditional knowledge related to the Tzeltal cosmovisión which the protagonist assimilates in this first section includes: the legend of the sun (pp.20-32); the brief mention of the four pillars which hold up the sky (p.39); the existence of the lab or animal counterpart (p.38), and the legend which relates to this belief (pp.40-44).

Traditional knowledge gained from the teachings of one's elders clearly dominates in the first section. Even when the story deals with the protagonist's personal experience — acquaintance with his father's curing powers; the fire which destroyed the family home; his meeting a kaxlán — he is only a passive onlooker, learning by observation rather than by active

experience. We also realize, judging from his remark upon his father's death that the narrator's awareness is still very much in its early stages: "Apenas iba dándome cuenta completa de las cosas cuando murió mi padre" (p.49).

The close of this first section is marked by the death of the protagonist's grandfather, the greatest repository of traditional wisdom. Room is left, nonetheless, for further development of the theme vis-à-vis traditional knowledge for the narrator's comprehension is still incomplete: "Después murió mi abuelo paterno, quien, en sus últimos días, me reveló las restantes palabras de los antiguos, sin poderme explicar bien el sentido de algunas de ellas" (p.50).

Chapter 5 marks a change of direction, introducing much more involvement of the protagonist in the experiences which are contributing to his growing awareness. The event which opens the chapter, significantly, takes place away from the family home and is a quasi-sexual experience, the latter in particular underlining its more personal nature. His cousin, a girl some years older than him, takes him to la piedra plana where she urges him to imitate with her the actions of her parents at night: "¡Hagamos el ruido!" (p.52). She is unsure of what to do and he (at the age of only eight!) knows even less. However, the incident gives a foretaste of future experiences while the narrator's subsequent recollections of it in the second section (pp.72 & 84) serve to unify the text.

In this same chapter the protagonist's experience outside the family home is expanded for he gets to know his own pueblo. He also sells himself to an enganchador and experiences the

journey to the plantations. Experience within a more traditional context is not completely left aside, however, for the chapter also includes his experience of the first Day of the Dead since his father's death and some information about the Indian authorities in the pueblo.

The narrator's time on the coffee plantation (Chapter 6) is an experience of a whole new world. Even the scenery is beyond his ken: "¡Qué extraño veía yo ese lugar! Más verde que mi propia tierra, no había palabras en mi mente para distinguir los colores de los árboles" (p.58). The strange place, the hard work, and the supremacy of the kaxlán all greatly widen his horizons. Adding further to the more personal emphasis in his experience at this stage are little details like his beginning to smoke and his discovery of how to rid himself of fleas. Traditional teaching is not entirely omitted, for Chapter 6 closes with the tale of the worship of the jolote (a large, turkey-like bird) in order to dissuade it from sending destructive winds and storm. Nevertheless, it would seem that the role of traditional wisdom is diminishing for not only does Lol, the teller of the tale, lament that, "Hoy en día, amigos, se pierden estas costumbres" (p.64), in the next chapter Lol is killed by a jaguar.

Chapter 7 establishes the stage reached so far in the narrator's experience and learning when he returns home. His experience on the plantation has taught him how to work: "¡Había aprendido a trabajar en cualquier parte!" (p.71) while his acquisition of money and new ladino clothing represent his knowledge of and participation in the world outside. We are reminded, however, by his mother's fruitless attempts to find him a prospective bride

at this early stage that his experience of women is still to come.

The arrival at the beginning of Chapter 8 of a teacher and his simple enquiry: "¿Quieres aprender, niño?" (p.73), establishes the new direction of the theme of growing awareness and learning in this, the third section: that of formal education. Although this teacher is replaced by another who is of no use, the question of formal education is maintained by the fact that the narrator and a companion run away to enrol in a school: El Internado de Amatenango.

The most important result of the narrator's formal education is that he learns Spanish. This marks a great step forward for it will enable him in the final section of the book to participate in the non-Indian world on fairer terms than he did on the coffee plantation. His awareness of the ladino becomes more sophisticated too, in his recognition of the first headmaster of the Internado as good and the second as bad. We can contrast this with his earlier one-sided view of the commands and threats of the caporal on the plantation. It forms an even greater contrast with his reaction of irrational fear upon seeing his first kaxlán: "me asusté mucho y quedé inmóvil, con la lengua tiesa" (p.46). Another potentially significant experience at the school is the visit of Cárdenas (incidentally the only concrete reference which dates events in the novel). At this stage, as with some of his early experiences in the first section, the narrator is only an onlooker to the pleas made for land. This moment, like his experience on the piedra plana, represents a foretaste of an awareness yet to be developed.

While the major result of the narrator's formal education is that he learns Spanish, it is in the school that he experiences his first real sexual encounter. He semi-proposes to his second girl-friend: "¿Y qué tal sería que yo te llevara a ti a mi pueblo?" (p.85). Their subsequent love-making is clearly presented as a further new experience in life for the narrator: "Después me sentí muy extraño, con el mismo mareo de las cosas nuevas"; "Con esa muchacha conocí otro secreto de la tierra" (p.86).

It is of interest to note that the narrator's experience of sex is presented on a similar level to that of the grandfather's teachings: "las verdades del mundo" (p.39), and to his initial awareness of the surrounding natural world: "íbamos acercándonos a la tierra, conociéndola, siempre nueva y con vértigo" (p.20). This creates a distinction between these as "essential" knowledge and the acquisition of familiarity with the ladino and his language as a more formal, cerebral knowledge.

Despite the increase of the latter in this third section, we realize precisely in the school that traditional knowledge is deeply rooted in the narrator's innermost being and his Indian world-view may well survive intact. This comes over in his reaction to twelve days confinement in bed for having spoken Tzeltal — reputedly insults — in class: "Mi corazón no quedó de acuerdo; sólo cumplí la orden" (pp.87-88). Rather than turning towards Spanish and ladino concerns he takes advantage of the time to revive his own language and traditional knowledge, focused on the teachings of his grandfather: "mi abuelo, maestro, iél sí que lo era!" (p.88).

This reidentification with the traditional Tzeltal

cosmovisión, however, does not fully crystallize until the close of the novel. It is the two other major advances in the knowledge of the narrator — Spanish and women — which affect his life first. At a finca he finds that the patrón is favourably impressed by his speaking Spanish (though he also finds shortly afterwards that his knowledge of the language of the ladinos seems to set one prospective bride's father against him); once back home, his mother eventually finds him a suitable girl whom he subsequently marries. Their first love-making closes Chapter 12.

The beginning of the new adult stage in the protagonist's life, the fourth and final section of the novel, is suggested by the opening words of Chapter 13 the following morning: "Amaneció en el mundo" (p.108). His first new adult experience is the birth of his child; the other adult awareness which comes to light in this chapter concerns land: the protagonist learns that the ladinos had appropriated the Indians' old communal lands and the Indians, himself included, now had to work on these lands for the benefit of the ladinos. Here again, we see the increasing sophistication in the narrator's view of the ladino, all part of his growing experience. While he had realized both good and bad in different headmasters of the Internado, here he becomes conscious of a more complex set-up. Although he objects in principle to the ladinos's appropriation of Indian land, he recognizes that his own boss is not a bad man: "era amable conmigo" (p.112), a fact borne out by his later concern for the narrator's health. The picture which emerges of an unjust system which may involve benevolent individuals leaves room for social criticism without casting the ladino in the previously inevitable role of

villain. By this stage, the narrator's awareness can cope with such a concept which in his younger days he could not have done. The anecdote concerning the courage of the visiting ladino who fell into the boiling sugar reinforces the implication that within an unjust system there may still exist men of moral greatness.

Having portrayed the protagonist of this Bildungsroman as acquiring increasing knowledge and awareness through his varied experience of the world, all in preparation for the final climax of his concientización, Castro inserts an effective double anti-climax: moral and physical. In Chapter 14 the narrator and a friend get drunk and become involved in a brawl, the result of which is the narrator's brief imprisonment. Having spent the whole novel up to this point gaining awareness of the world around him, the contrary effect of his drunkenness is aptly conveyed here by the words: "Perdimos el mundo" (p.116). It is almost as if he has lost all his learning and is as he was at the opening of the book when, "así, como borracho, lo miré todo" (p.11). The pointless brawl which ensues shows the narrator at his point of greatest moral degradation. Even his escape from prison is unheroic for he asks to be set free and, on the way to buy aguardiente for the necessary bribe, gives his guard the slip.

Added to this moral decadence, we have the protagonist's illness, his lowest ebb as regards health and partly brought on by his drunkenness and injuries from the brawl. Brujos and curanderos sent for by his kindly patrón fail to improve his condition and he is cured instead in a ladino Christian hospital. Nevertheless, we begin to see again at this moment the narrator's adherence to his own cultural values for he mentally rejects the

Christian doctrine which the head nurse foists upon him in favour of the teachings of his grandfather: "Yo me acordé de las palabras de mi abuelo paterno pero no le dije nada" (p.130).

In the last chapter the protagonist comes across other new experiences of the ladino world, in particular the cinema. Traditional learning is also reasserted, however, with the telling of a final traditional tale amongst a group of young Tzeltales who are eager to welcome and help in the hoped-for progress of schools, roads, land redistribution, etc. The narrator's open-minded attitude to such progress is made clear on the last page: "Creo que la gente que se anuncia llegará, y quiero recibirla, conocerla" (p.143). We find confirmation of his receptive stance in Rodríguez Chicharro's assertion that the man on whose life-story the novel seems to have been loosely based, "parece que poco después llegó a ser promotor cultural".²⁴ Yet despite this open attitude to the benefits of the world of the ladinos the narrator will undoubtedly hold fast to his Tzeltal world too, as is evident in the novel's last words: "Seguiré el rumbo de los hombres verdaderos" (p.143), the latter being how the Tzeltales view themselves.

The theme of growing awareness and learning is of great importance in providing a unity in this novel. The many disparate events and the mixture of the narrator's life-story with Tzeltal oral tradition are not merely linked by the constant presence of a single narrator. Things as different as the legend of the sun,

24. "Carlo Antonio Castro: Los hombres verdaderos", La Palabra y el Hombre, no.11 (July-September 1959), 504-09 (p.506).

experience of a new geographical location, the learning of Spanish, and an acquaintance with sex all contribute to the theme. Had other critics been as perceptive as D.L. Schmidt in his recognition of this theme (p.194) they might have been less critical of the novel's coherence.

One particular element springing from the theme which is of especial importance in lending an overall unity to this novel is the tension between the survival of the Tzeltal world-view on the one hand and on the other its decadence and the corrupting element of ladino influence. This tension acts as a structuring device, much as Rubín's effective use of force and counterforce in El callado dolor de los tzotziles, while at the same time adding a note of dramatic tension to the novel, especially towards the end.

The initial force of traditional sources of wisdom in the first section is undermined in the second by an acquaintance with the ladino and an adoption of some of his ways while the third has the protagonist thoroughly immersed, through his own choice, in ladino influence at the school. The reassertion of the force, the narrator's allegiance to his Tzeltal world-view, which is first evident at the school, does not finally come to fruition until the end of the novel owing to further manifestations of the counterforce.

This effective tension which gives Los hombres verdaderos its overall structure is often implied symbolically. In the early stages of the novel, despite the concentration on the traditional world-view, there is a suggestion of Tzeltal decadence in the father's bouts of drunkenness and neglect of his lands.

This surreptitious counterforce of decadence is put over clearly in antagonism to the survival of the traditional world-view epitomized in the grandfather: "siempre enojado con él debido a las borracheras en que el hijo vivía y gastaba todo: los regalos que le hacían como pago por sus curaciones, los dineros que conseguía, y los productos de la tierra, abandonada por sus brazos, apenas labrada por mi débil mam [grandfather]" (p.12).

The supremacy of the ladino over the Indian, the decline of Tzeltal tradition, and the Indian's adoption of ladino ways is suggested in the second section with the enganchador's ominous phrase, "Ya eres mío, indito" (p.57), the death of Lol, who had conserved the dying traditions of old, and the narrator's adoption of ladino dress.

It is perhaps significant that the re-emergence of the force -- the protagonist's reidentification with the traditional world in the school, shortly after the centre of the novel -- is put over as plain fact rather than by symbolic implication. This gives it full credibility, making it unmistakable.

Subsequent to this, the potentially destructive effect of the way of the ladinos on the narrator's Tzeltal identity is suggested by his being regarded as an unlikely prospective husband by one girl's father: "-¿Será que tu hijo quiere tener una mujer de nuestro pueblo? ¡Él ya sabe la castilla!" (p.100). Again the supremacy of the ladino is evident in the current system of land-ownership (though a note of hope is introduced by the kind nature of the narrator's own boss). Where the counterforce really gains strength, however, is in Chapters 14 and 15, with the narrator's drunkenness, the brawl, his imprisonment, and

his resulting illness. Here we see an intensification of the initial hint of a counterforce in the father's conduct in Chapter 1. Not only does the narrator's drunkenness recall the father's; the brujos and curanderos recall the drunken father, too, in their demands of alcohol in payment for the treatment they provide. Worst of all, while the father, despite his decadence, at least effected a cure, these healers cannot help the protagonist. Only ladino medicine can cure him.

The reassertion of the Tzeltal world-view in the face of ladino influence and despite these indications of decadence is made clear, however, in the final chapter, initially suggested by the recognition within the last tale of the validity of the views of the old: "De este modo supo, como ya lo sabían los ancianos, que debajo de nosotros viven los chinuwinketik" (p.141). It is interesting to note, all the same, that this reassertion does not simply involve the triumph of the force over the counterforce. Rather, it entails the reassertion of the force as a first priority yet catering for co-operation with elements of the counterforce. The narrator's final assertion, "Seguiré el rumbo de los hombres verdaderos" (p.143), does not exclude a receptive attitude to ladino progress: "Creo que la gente que se anuncia llegará, y quiero recibirla, conocerla" (p.143). Symbolically, the coexistence of force and counterforce is implied in that the last tale is told "en el idioma de los ladinos" (p.138). Clearly, the implication is that the Tzeltal world-view can endure, even within a ladino context and incorporating elements from that ladino context. Indeed, the reference in the final paragraph to the Milky Way, which had formed an important part of the traditional

cosmovisión the narrator acquired from his grandfather, suggests the renewed vigour of this world-view: "brilla más que nunca el Camino de la Helada" (p.143).

Such is the message of Los hombres verdaderos, its optimism standing in contrast to the pessimistic ending of Juan Pérez Jolote. The narrator's open attitude and self-assertion is comparable with that of Che Ndu. The optimism, however, is greater in Los hombres verdaderos for while Che's story left him at the end an old man, if a determined one, the protagonist of Los hombres verdaderos is in the prime of life. There is even the optimism of a possible symbolic link implied in the last paragraph between him and the xutil of the first legend who became el nuevo sol: "Cuando la luz del sol, la luz del xutil, comience a calentar, yo reanudaré la ruta" (p.143). Even more so than Che Ndu, our narrator here thus emerges as the potential hombre nuevo Norma Klahn so surprisingly saw in Juan (p.241).

It is perhaps at this juncture that we can attempt an interpretation of the epigraph — an extract in both Tzeltal and Spanish from the first tale — which at first sight gives a pessimistic impression:

Por eso hay muerte eterna en el mundo, ya no regresamos nunca, y nunca resucitamos; si nuestra Madre no hubiera llorado podríamos revivir.
(Palabras de los Hombres Verdaderos)

Immediately prior to these words, the xutil in the first tale had brought his brothers back to life. Alas they were condemned to turn into animals because their mother, contrary to the xutil's instructions, wept upon seeing them. If we are to see any optimism in the epigraph in relation to the end of the novel we

might surmise that, just as if the mother had heeded the xutil's instructions they would have survived, so if the example of the narrator is heeded — the hombre nuevo whom we can compare to the nuevo sol — then there is hope for the renaissance of Tzeltal culture.

The optimism of Los hombres verdaderos is not the only pleasing feature of its message. Due to the novel's subtle symbolism, the message is not made too explicit. Nor is it merely embroidered on by the author as was the conclusion of Lola Casanova or even, to a lesser extent, Juan Pérez Jolote. Here the message springs from theme and structure: from the resolution of the tension between force and counterforce.

As will have become evident, the symbolism of this novel plays an important part in integrating what constitute the most readily identifiable potential "impurities": the folk tales. Perhaps the most evident case is that of Lol's tale where, after having lamented the loss of the old traditions, he — one who conserves them — is killed. The content of his tale, too, is linked to the general concern of the destruction of the old ways for it deals with worship of the jolote in a bid precisely to avoid destructive forces.

The last tale, likewise, is integrated both through the situation of the teller and the content of the tale. The teller is a young, forward-looking, bilingual Tzeltal, eager for progress, yet he still preserves the old traditions. As for the content, the tale itself concerns a disbelieving man who is reconvinced of the validity of the ancient beliefs. There is also an insistence, by the "little people" whom he comes across, on the things of the

spirit which is, again, pertinent to the endurance of traditional Tzeltal belief. This last tale is also connected in its content to a belief expressed by the grandfather in Chapter 3 — the concept of the world being held up by four pillars — for it is this concept that the man in the last tale initially expresses disbelief in. Thus a link is established with the first section of the novel where the indigenous world-view was first put over.

Any symbolism concerning the first tale about the sun is not confirmed until the end where it could be surmised that the narrator is linked to the new sun. The tale is integrated at the time by other means: the mention of the sun as the life-giving deity in the opening lines of the novel establishes a precedent for further development on the subject; the tale is told by one of the narrator's immediate family: the grandfather; the atmosphere of this first tale is very much like that among the narrator and his playmates. The latter is particularly evident in the attempt of the xutil's elder brothers to get rid of him which seems much like the attempt of the narrator and his playmates to get rid of the hen they used as a make-believe deer for their hunting games. A further link to the narrator's life is that both he and the xutil learn how to work. Various minor references in the tale also relate to the narrative to follow: a passing reference to the moon reflects on the narrator's later experience in his enganche: "es por luna, mes, que contarán aquellos que trabajan y aquellos que contraigan deudas" (p.31). There is also an explanation of how the rabbit, t'ul, got its hare lip which is picked up in a subsequent preparation to hunt "el animal que tiene partida la trompita" (p.32). We remember this again at a much later stage

when the Tzeltal word for rabbit is mentioned in a place-name:

"T'ulum, tierra de los conejos" (p.57).

The second tale, also told by the grandfather, is a legend about two men who, having something of great strength as their lab, were able to defeat an evil pukuj, or demon: el ijk'al. The story clearly relates to what the grandfather had told the narrator as a child shortly beforehand about his lab, as is made clear at the end of the tale: "Como ves, es bueno contar con un lab fuerte que pueda ayudarnos" (p.45). The concepts in this tale are recalled at various points in the novel. The concept of a demon, or pukuj, is picked up again when the narrator falls ill and is diagnosed as "jodido por el pukuj" (p.128). The idea of the lab is also reasserted at that moment: "lo que sufrió aquel lab desconocido que había caminado bajo el frío de la noche y bajo la lluvia" (p.127). The lab is referred to again on other occasions too: the ladino's assertion that the tigre that killed Lol is "el lab de algún hombre de palabra enrevesada, de esta parte" (p.69) and the accusation that the narrator's friend has the evil owl as his lab (p.117), which contributes to the fight which breaks out in Chapter 14. It is particularly the recurrent mention of the concept of the lab which helps to integrate this second tale.

Perhaps more far-reaching, however, in relation to the whole novel, is a parallel between the narrator's possible use of his lab and the two men in the tale who made use of theirs to combat an evil force. Although it is not stated precisely what the narrator's lab is (for one's lab should be kept a secret) we are given to believe, taking into account the narrator's evident

powers of expression, that he comes into the following category: "Me dijo que los que mejor hablaban, aquellos a los que el idioma verdadero daba todos sus secretos, tenían como lab un ts'unun, un chupamiel" (p.38). It is perhaps this gift of self-expression and acquaintance with the old secrets that the narrator will be able to use to combat the destructive forces of Tzeltal decadence and detrimental ladino influence.

We see, therefore, that the Tzeltal tales incorporated into Los hombres verdaderos open up insight into a whole world-view and have a functional part to play in the message of this novel. They do not, as Rodríguez Chicharro holds, constantly interrupt "el desarrollo de la trama"²⁵ but rather contribute to that very development and its resolution.

In addition to the functional integration of the folk tales, we perceive within the rest of the rather diverse content of this novel that Castro is constantly suggesting links which add coherence. On occasion, the connection is suggested by the narrator, as is the case where he describes the boiling sugar on the finca in the fourth section in terms of the lava of the volcano his mother had described to him as a child (p.15): "¡Tal como la lava en aquel volcán que, según me contó mi madre, se quebró un día, así hervían las mieles de azúcar en el vientre de los grandes peroles!" (p.113). We have also the foretaste of sex on the piedra plana recalled by the narrator on later occasions: "¡qué bien me acordaba de la piedra plana!" (p.72); "la fuerza que antes me faltó, en la piedra plana, hoy me sobraba" (p.84). Similarly,

25. "La novela indigenista mexicana", p.117.

though unspecified by the narrator, the anticipation of his later awareness of the land problem with Cárdenas's visit to the school acts as a linking device.

Many of the minor links are linguistic. We remember the children's chat about the wild boar, "walam chitam, pariente del puerco, al que sólo se nombra chitam" (p.16), when the family pig, "nuestro cochino, el chitam doméstico" (p.33), is killed by the burning of the house. The link is emphasized because of the word chitam. Likewise, a link between the first enganchador and the woman who runs the hospital is created by the use of the Tzeltal word puj puj: "Este ladino era puj puj, barrigón" (p.57); "la puj puj, la gordota" (p.130). Similarly, a reference on page 67 to the language of the Tojolabales as "ch'ol k'op, el idioma torcido", is picked up on page 89: "También se amontonaron unos cuantos tojolabales, los hombres del ch'ol k'op".

The inclusion of indigenous words within the Spanish text in order to create authentic flavour has been a common feature of indigenista literature in Mexico since López y Fuentes's El indio (1935). Castro, as we see from the above example, tends to explain the words in an unaffected fashion by means of a simple translation within the narrative, giving a less academic or anthropological impression than Pozas's option of explanation in a footnote. Alternatively, in Los hombres verdaderos the meaning becomes evident simply from the context:

-¿Y qué tal sería que yo te llevara a ti a mi pueblo?
-¡No! ¡No quiero irme a tu lumal! Si fuera al mío . . .
(p.85)

However, it is not the continuation in Los hombres verdaderos of this rather old-hat device of including indigenous words which is

significant but rather the new uses to which Castro puts it.

Castro's use of Tzeltal words is recurrent, with a gradual elimination of the translation. By this means he slowly builds up in the reader a vocabulary of key words, relating to everyday life and Tzeltal belief, both categories being relevant to the narrator's awareness. Thus the reader himself goes through a kind of learning process, parallel to that of the narrator's experience. Some of the key everyday words are tat (father); mam (grandfather); ach'ix (girl); tsek (woman's smock); nichja' (aguardiente). As regards the indigenous world-view we learn lab, pukuj, and others. Words like xutil (younger brother) relate to both for not only does the word deal with family relationships, it is also the younger brother in the first legend who became the new sun.

It is an easy step from this creation of a tiny Tzeltal vocabulary in the reader to making use of active participation on the reader's part in this respect in order to establish links that might not otherwise have been realized, like that of the wild boar and the pig, both chitam, or, indeed, the final possible symbolism in the mention of "la luz del sol, la luz del xutil" (p.143).

In addition to exploring new avenues in the indigenista genre in his inclusion of indigenous words in the text, Castro also tries to convey the essence of the Tzeltal way of thought in the Spanish he uses. Unlike J.M. Arguedas in Peru, who initially delved into syntactical transposition in his endeavour to "comunicar a la lengua casi extranjera la materia de nuestro espíritu",²⁶

26. José María Arguedas, "La novela y el problema de la expresión literaria en el Perú", included in the introduction to his novel, Yawar Fiesta (Santiago de Chile, 1968), 11-17 (p.15).

Castro opts for direct translation of noun phrases and idiomatic expressions. Thus the heavens are described as la curva divina, the Milky Way as el Camino de la Helada and aguardiente as agua florida. Referring to a death we have the phrase: "Terminó su mirada" (p.49) while expressions containing a reference to the heart are common for realizations and awareness: "Nada me decía el corazón acerca de las mujeres" (p.83); "Aprendió mi corazón que no era bastante el terrenito que yo trabajaba" (p.111). Again with corazón, the greeting equivalent to "How do you do?" comes over as "¿Qué dice tu corazón?".

Castro's translation of Tzeltal idiom suggests the mode of thought behind the language and, furthermore, enhances the Spanish as evocative metaphor. We can wholeheartedly agree with an anonymous comment on the back of Castro's book of poetry, Íntima Fauna (Xalapa, 1962), referring to his achievement in the language of Los hombres verdaderos: "su búsqueda de una forma expresiva que llevara al interior de una lengua indígena, sin dañar al castellano, resultó muy fructuoso".

The poetic language of Los hombres verdaderos marks a great contrast with the stark expression of Juan Pérez Jolote, though the latter was highly effective in its own way. In addition to limitations of vocabulary, Pozas imposed on himself an almost total absence of commentary in order to achieve the most objective narration possible for informative purposes. Castro, on the other hand, is not so concerned with producing a monografía but prefers the advantages of a personalized account which evokes an identification with the protagonist in the reader. As we can deduce from the opening words of the novel, "Cuando supe pensar" (p.11),

Castro intends a much more subjective emphasis than Juan Pérez Jolote, the latter unusually objective for a first-person narration. Here, we receive information of the kind we might expect from a first-person narrator: an insight into his thoughts and reactions, perhaps offering confidential details.

An example of precisely this is found on the occasion of the fire that burned down the narrator's home as a child. The event is recalled in the narrator's memory in the context of his own disobedience at the time. Instead of gathering firewood as his father had told him to do he had gone rabbit-hunting with his playmates and was returning, apprehensive of punishment:

iba pensando, y todos los demás harían lo mismo, en los azotes que me aguardaban por mi descuido. ¡Ninguna leña había cortado! Quizá me privarían de comida . . . Quizá . . . Pero tenía más miedo a presentarme en casa, ante mis padres, que a cualquiera de los castigos que acostumbraban aplicarme. (pp.32-33)

So great was his concentration on these inner thoughts that he was oblivious to the most obvious events around him: "yo, ni me había dado cuenta de que a mi lado estaba una hoguera" (p.33). Having realized what must have happened, he helps as instructed but is still thinking all the while of his own personal predicament: "Y, a pesar de todo, se alegró mi corazón porque así me escapaba del castigo que había temido" (p.33)

As is fitting to the subjective, autobiographical mode, it is a personal focus on the narrator which dominates also on the few occasions that customs are mentioned: events on the Day of the Dead; the communal effort in rebuilding the house; the marriage ceremony.

The matter of the Day of the Dead is immediately related

to the protagonist in that his father has died and this is the first día de las tumbas since his death. We can deduce the customs — the provision of food for the souls of the deceased — but the event is very much seen from the point of view of the narrator at a time of shortage: "Meses después de la muerte de mi padre, asistió su ánima a la primera fiesta propia. ¡Y debe haber comido más de lo que nosotros, los vivos, podíamos hacerlo entonces!" (p.53). Only after this personal focus has been established is some general information introduced in the following two paragraphs. Subsequently, we return to the narrator's recollections concerning his father on this occasion: "Medio garrafón para él solo recibió entonces mi padre"; "Luego, todos nosotros comimos de lo que él no había querido" (p.53). Before the final paragraph of similar emphasis: "Cómo le gustaría a mi padre . . . " (p.54), there are some details which could have been put over merely as general information but instead are presented as a specific incident, witnessed by the narrator: "Cerca de su tumba estaba la de un anciano, quien había sido autoridad del pueblo . . . le hacían una fiesta con arpa, guitarra y violín . . . como nosotros derramaban el aguardiente en la cabecera del muerto" (pp.53-54). The predominant emphasis, as we can see, is not costumbrista but personal.

The rebuilding of the family home after the fire again offers this measured blend of specific and general. Again the narrator begins with the specific: "La gente se puso de acuerdo con mi tat para volver a hacer la casa, en el mismo lugar" (p.34). General details (only seven lines) follow as to how this is done

and what is needed, acting as a brief explanation of the matter broached in the first sentence. The narrative then returns to the specific: "Mi padre logró conseguir pronto lo necesario" (p.35).

An interesting feature of the marriage ceremony which gives the events individuality is that the man who gives the girl away is not her father but her brother. However, he must play the father-in-law in relation to the narrator in the marriage ritual:

Señores y ancianos, todos ustedes, perdonennos nuestro descuido. Perdonennos las faltas que hemos traído con este pequeño yerno . . .

Hablábamos así porque mi cuñado estaba siendo, realmente, mi suegro en aquella fiesta de casamiento; y yo era como yerno también de todos los hombres mayores, de los parientes de su edad. Mientras la fiesta durara tenía él que hablarme como a un yerno, no como a un cuñado. Después sí ya sería como siempre. (p.103)

In addition to the obvious personal involvement here the differentiation between real life and accepted ritual, while establishing the normal typicalities, makes it particularly evident that we are dealing with a specific, identifiable occasion.

Only on one occasion — the mention of the elders in Oxchuc — does the mention of customs seem to emerge simply as general information. However, the details are presented in relation to the theme:

¡Cuántas cosas se aprenden en nuestro pueblo grande, el de los tres nudos!

En poco tiempo me enteré de cómo teníamos autoridades . . . (p.55)

On the whole the lack of costumbrista emphasis in this novel is evident either in the personal emphasis or in that many typical customs are only mentioned in passing and treated as commonplace. The custom of burying a dead person's possessions with the body can be deduced, though it is not explicitly presented as a custom,

from the burial of Lol's remains: "Hicimos un hoyo allí mismo y enterramos aquello, junto con la red y el sombrero que llevábamos" (p.67). Similarly, at the birth of the child, the father's part in the birth can be deduced from the brief comment: "¡Puse toda mi fuerza en el abrazo que le di para que naciera, cuando comenzó a gritar!" (p.109).

At the birth of his child we see that not only is the typical procedure taken for granted; also we find a much greater emotional depth than was evident in Juan Pérez Jolote on the corresponding occasion. Here, our narrator's emotional response is much more akin to Che Ndu's and comes over in his reaction to having to leave home immediately after the child's birth in order to earn money on the fincas. It is succinctly expressed, so as to avoid sentimentality, but clearly comes straight from the heart: "¡Ésa fue la vez que más desesperado estuve! ¡Cuánto sentí haber tenido que engancharme!" (p.111).

The subjective emphasis in Los hombres verdaderos also caters for striking insight into the narrator's personal impressions. Perhaps the most memorable example is his view of the cinema, which Castro captures superbly:

En esos momentos brotó un rayo que cayó de lleno en el trapo blanco del fondo; aparecieron ahí unas letras, ¡qué claro se veían! Estaba yo leyéndolas cuando aparecieron otras y otras . . . ¡Sólo parte de ellas pude leer, ya ni me acuerdo qué decían. Mi amigo afirmó que era el nombre de la película.

Después principió a salir gente, más grande que los ladinos y que los hombres verdaderos; sus caras se hacían mayores y ocupaban todo el trapo; luego se volvían más pequeñas; se iban y entraban y, de pronto, ya había también un carro, corriendo en la propia tela . . . Pero todo aquello se veía como si fuera en algún lugar que no estuviese cerrado, como si no fuera dentro de aquella casa; yo estaba admirado. (pp.136-37)

The subjective focus on the narrator in Los hombres verdaderos is a retrospective one, as is evident from the first lines of the novel where he introduces a word from later experience: "así, como borracho, lo miré todo" (p.11). We realize that he is looking back on his early years with the sexual awareness of later experience from his comment on what happened on the piedra plana: "Yo seguía sin saber qué era lo que quería; es que estaba muy pequeño aún y no interpretaba sus ideas" (p.52). Likewise, an earlier remark from the first section reveals the narrative stance of one who has been educated and is aware of the social status of the Indian in relation to the ladino: "En ese entonces, ninguno de los hombres verdaderos sabía leer ni escribir. ¡Así estábamos de pobres! Nadie podía defenderse" (p.36).

However, by use of dialogue and vivid description of events, Castro plays down the retrospective stance, bringing the text to life as if events were being narrated from a moment very little removed in time. This marks a contrast with "Che Ndu" where little dialogue was used and the retrospective point of view, consequently, was more constantly evident. A good example in the present novel concerns the shooting of the jaguar that killed Lol:

Seguimos buscando al tigre; no tardamos ya mucho en encontrarlo. El ladino lo vio sentado en la cruceta de dos ramas:

-¡Allá está! -nos dijo, en voz baja.

Hablaba en tojolabal; pero yo, lo que no entendía, lo adivinaba. El idioma de esas tierras es extraño, a veces se comprende, a veces no.

El ladino preparó su escopeta.

Apuntó cuidadosamente y disparó. El arma no hizo fuego, pero tampoco ruido. El tigre siguió en el árbol, sin moverse.

-¿Alguien tiene un pedazo de enagua? -preguntó el kaxlán.

-Yo llevo un tsek para mi mujer . . . -contestó el más viejo.

-¡Córtale un pedazo! Es necesario . . .

El otro deshizo su bulto, rompió su tsek:

-¡Toma! -dijo.

Me pareció que lo usaba como taco, para limpiar la escopeta. No vi muy bien lo que hizo. Luego, aseguró:

-¡Ya está!

Cargó. Disparó en seguida, apuntando con tino.

El tigre dio un salto en la cruceta: antes de que cayera, el kaxlan le había disparado dos tiros más. ¡Era un gran cazador ese hombre!

-¡Ya le di a este hijo de la . . . !

Así dijo, hablando en la castilla, con las palabras que más se entienden. Corrió hacia el balam y lo remató. El animal ya no hizo ningún movimiento.

¡Qué grande era aquel tigre!

Enorme, capaz de arrastrar dos hombres o cuatro mujeres. Sus dientes, amarillos, se alargaban como dedos; apestaba a orines, pero su piel era hermosa, igual que el cielo estrellado; así era. (pp.67-68)

In this last example we perceive also a subjective focus on the narrator in his comment on the ladino's mode of speech, on his actions, and on the resemblance of the jaguar's patterned hide to the starry sky. This subjective element has not been lost through the vivid narration of a scene involving the action and dialogue of others.

A similar blend of concise narration, dialogue, and subjective reaction is sometimes used by Castro in his presentation of aspects of the Tzeltal world-view. The grandfather's explanation to the narrator of the concept of the lab incorporates these three elements:

En secreto me dijo un día cuál era mi lab, mi bestia amiga:

-¡Jamás debes de decirlo a nadie! -me aconsejó muy serio-. ¡Sépanlo otros y tú estarás en peligro!

Yo lo escuchaba asombrado, casi con miedo. (pp.37-38)

However, Castro does not always use a subjective emphasis on his narrator in presenting the Tzeltal world-view, as we see in the case of the four major folk tales. The tales stand as told by their narrator, without any subjective intrusion by the protagonist. Castro's intention here, clearly, is to give the reader

direct access to the Tzeltal cosmovisión as expressed in these legends, without the intervention of an intermediary. The reason is much like the logic behind the choice of a first-person narrator: it avoids the presence of an author/narrator who stands between the reader and the material expressed. Thus Castro ensures that we receive an unadulterated version of these legends.

We are conscious, nonetheless, of their importance in contributing to the narrator's crystallizing Weltanschauung. This comes over partly through occasional mention of his response outwith the body of the tales. We find a reference to the first legend, about the sun, for instance, in the chapter which follows: "Y yo recordaba, oyéndolo, el viaje final del xutil" (p.39). The reference to the xutil in the last paragraph of the book again confirms the narrator's consciousness of this tale. Furthermore, we are aware that the first two tales were told by the grandfather and so constitute the world with which the narrator reidentifies when in the school:

Pero aproveché las horas largas que entonces pasaron, recordando algunas de las palabras del idioma verdadero que ya no hacían ruido en mi boca. Y siempre que pensaba en ellas, cuando las decía en voz baja, sentía el frío de las noches estrelladas y la voz de mi abuelo, maestro, ¡él sí que lo era!, de las viejas historias de los pokowiniketik . . . (p.88)

The other two tales, too, are clearly a part of these old truths: Lol puts over his as part of the "viejas costumbres" which are being lost and the last tale, told by one of the young Tzeltales at the end, is described as "las palabras de su pueblo . . . acerca de los antiguos" (p.138). In view of the narrator's final stance, the crystallization of his growing awareness and learning, there is no doubt about his positive response to these

tales despite the lack of subjective emphasis during their telling.

Looking back on these first-person Indian narratives we can affirm that each, in addition to offering an insight into an indigenous life and world-view, is also a structured narrative of artistic merit (though Juan Pérez Jolote, admittedly, does suffer more than the other two from some material which is not fully assimilated). Of particular interest is the variation in subjectivity in these first-person narratives. While Juan Pérez Jolote's stark objectivity has an effective impact, we might, from the experience of Los hombres verdaderos, suggest that objectivity is not a prerequisite for satisfying the informative function. Despite its apparent disregard for the informative function, Los hombres verdaderos, with its much more subjective emphasis, caters for a wealth of information about the Tzeltal world-view which it presents through the person of the narrator. In view of what we learn about the Indian idiosyncrasy from Juan Pérez Jolote and Los hombres verdaderos, much more so than from "Che Ndu: ejidatario chinanteco", we can perhaps conclude that the most effective insight into the indigenous world-view can be provided by enabling the reader to follow the learning process of an Indian individual rather than presenting him with this world-view as a fait accompli.

CHAPTER V

TWO NOVELS BY ROSARIO CASTELLANOS

The approach to the Indian as a part of the whole spectrum of society which we find in the novels of Rosario Castellanos (1925-74) gives a less exclusively Indian emphasis than the first-person Indian narratives examined in our previous chapter. The part played by the Indian is, nonetheless, a key one. Apart from her collection of short stories, Ciudad Real (1960), examined in Chapter II of this study, Castellanos wrote two novels which come within the bounds of indigenista fiction: Balún-canán (1957), her first novel, and Oficio de tinieblas (1962), regarded by many critics as the culmination of the indigenista genre in Mexico.

Both novels draw on the author's experience in the state of Chiapas where she spent her childhood and early adolescence and to where she later returned to work with the Indians. For this reason we find many points of contact between them. Both are set in the Cárdenas era and focus on Indian unrest and rebellion in the context of ladino corruption and racial and class prejudice. Particularly among the Indians there are even some similar characters: Felipe and Juana, Indians on the family estate of Chactajal in Balún-canán, bear traits which emerge in the more complex characters of Pedro and Catalina in Oficio de tinieblas while the Indian nana — a figure deriving from Rosario's own childhood experience — is an important person in both novels.

Despite this apparent overlap, Castellanos has created two very different novels (unlike many of the early indigenista novelists, who often seemed unable to gather together sufficient compatible material for one single, coherent novel). Balún-canán, a shortish and fairly simple narrative, is experimental in technique, using a first-person child narrator for two of its three parts; Oficio de tinieblas, on the other hand, a full-length novel of ambitious and complex content, including a considerable degree of psychological interiorization, employs a largely traditional novelistic mould. The key to Castellanos's novelistic creation, clearly, lies outside the raw materials.

BALÚN-CANÁN

Balún-canán uses a first-person child narrator for the first and third of its three parts. This is not an Indian narrator but, rather, an alter ego of the author as a child, comparable in some respects to Ernesto in J.M. Arguedas's Los ríos profundos (1958). Nonetheless, such a narrator does offer us some of the advantages of the first-person Indian narrator for, although not herself an Indian, the seven-year-old girl who is our narrator does go through a process of growing awareness and knowledge concerning the Indian. Just as in Juan Pérez Jolote and Los hombres verdaderos, the reader is drawn by the first-person narrative to follow this process.

The process of growing awareness in the niña vis-à-vis the Indian takes place in Part I, thus acting as an exposition for the events of the central part where the Indians of the family estate eventually rise up against the Argüello family. There are

two major aspects of this growing awareness in the niña: her increasing identification, through her nana, with the Indian and his outlook and also her growing awareness of the relationship of conflict between Indian and ladino. Added to the latter, though not really presented through the niña's sensibility, is information on the agrarian problem, the prime area of tension between Indian and ladino. Thirdly, and only partly through the niña's sensibility, there is a mounting sense of impending doom, an anticipation of the conflict to come.

Castellanos commented on Part I of Balún-canán that, "La acción avanza muy poco. Se le podría juzgar como una serie de estampas, aisladas en apariencia pero que funcionan en conjunto".¹ Indeed, the immediate, superficial impression, particularly up until Chapter 19 where the journey to Chactajal begins to provide a continuous narrative thread, is of a narrative which moves freely to and fro among the niña's varied impressions and experiences. We find events as different as kite flying, legends told by the nana, the arrival of a wounded Indian at the house, and many more. However, in addition to the general unity provided by the narrator, the diverse incidents of Part I are bound together by their common purpose: their three-fold contribution to matters concerning the Indian: appreciation of his world-view, awareness of tension between Indian and ladino, especially as regards the land problem, and a growing sense of the storm to come.

As we shall see in an examination of these three aspects,

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1. Emmanuel Carballo, "Rosario Castellanos: la historia de sus libros contada por ella misma", La Cultura en México, 19 December 1962, p.4.

it is often on a symbolic level that the steps in the process are suggested. This was one of the advantages of the child's view which compensated in some ways for the limitations of the narrator's age, as Castellanos herself comments: "Una niña de esos años es incapaz de observar muchas cosas, y, sobre todo, es incapaz de expresarlas. Sin embargo, el mundo en que se mueve es lo suficientemente fantástico como para que en él funcionen las imágenes poéticas".²

The niña sympathizes with the Indian outlook and this forms a bridge to the Indian for the non-Indian reader. We come to share the affinity with the indigenous outlook which the niña has acquired through contact with her Indian nana and her tales. This puts us in a position of sympathy towards the Indians on the family estate in Part II. Such an affinity, however, is not fully present from the very beginning. Rather, we see the niña progress from an ambivalent attitude to the Indian towards a much more receptive one which shows an identification with the indigenous world-view and the Indian cause.

The first chapter suggests this ambivalence. While the niña's rejection of the nana's opening tale -- "No me cuentes ese cuento, nana"³ -- might imply a lack of appreciation of the nana's teachings, the exact words of her tale reveal that it is perhaps the final annihilation of the Indian by her generation that the child repudiates:

2. Carballo, "Rosario Castellanos", p.5.

3. Rosario Castellanos, Balún-cacán, 2nd edition (Mexico: FCE, 1961), p.9. All subsequent references are to this edition.

- . . . Y entonces, coléricos, nos desposeyeron, nos arrebataron lo que habíamos atesorado: la palabra, que es el arca de la memoria. Desde aquellos días arden y se consumen con el leño en la hoguera. Sube el humo en el viento y se deshace. Queda la ceniza sin rostro. Para que puedas venir tú y el que es menor que tú y les baste un soplo, solamente un soplo . . . (p.9)

This implicit refusal to be party to the annihilation of the Indian suggests a possible sympathy in the niña towards him. Subsequent details in this first chapter are, however, less positive. There is clearly a hostility towards the Indian nana in the words: "¿Sabe mi nana que la odio cuando me peina?" (p.10). The comment that immediately follows reveals a prejudice against the Indian despite also a certain acceptance of the fact that the nana has a different outlook: "No lo sabe. No sabe nada. Es india, está descalza y no usa ninguna ropa debajo de la tela azul del tzec. No le da vergüenza. Dice que la tierra no tiene ojos" (p.10). The closing words of the chapter again suggest rejection of the Indian on the part of the niña for, having been scolded with the words, "-Te vas a volver india" (p.10), for spilling her milk, she reflects as follows: "Su amenaza me sobrecoge. Desde mañana la leche no se derramará" (p.10).

In Chapter 2 the child's reaction to the Indian women in the market is little more positive. Her attitude is one of simple observation followed by an inability to come to terms with certain aspects:

Tropezamos con las indias que tejen pichulej, sentadas en el suelo. Conversan entre ellas, en su curioso idioma, acezante como ciervo perseguido. Y de pronto echan a volar sollozos altos y sin lágrimas que todavía me espantan, a pesar de que los he escuchado tantas veces. (pp.11-12)

There follows, however, as we shall see, a progressive sympathy with the Indian as represented by the nana and an identification

with indigenous belief as it is expressed by her.

In addition to the snippet of a tale which opens the novel, the nana tells the little girl two further tales: the story of the dzulúm (Chapter 6), a powerful and attractive beast which carries people to their death and whose name means "ansia de morir" (p.21) and (Chapter 9) the legend of the origins of Man — both rich and poor — according to indigenous belief. The niña's response to these manifestations of indigenous belief is sympathetic. She seems to enter into the spirit of each tale, appreciating the beliefs it represents: "¿Se la había llevado el dzulúm?" (p.21); "¿Quién es mi pobre, nana?" (p.31).

We also see evidence of the child's positive response to the indigenous world-view in her attitude to the wind when out with her parents and brother in Chapter 7 flying his kite. She feels for the power of the wind: "Y me quedo aquí, con los ojos bajos porque (la nana me lo ha dicho) es así como el respeto mira a lo que es grande" (p.23). She immediately tells her nana of the experience on returning home:

—¿Sabes? Hoy he conocido al viento.

Ella no interrumpe su labor. Continúa desgranando el maíz, pensativa y sin sonrisa. Pero yo sé que está contenta.

—Eso es bueno, niña. Porque el viento es uno de los nueve guardianes de tu pueblo. (p.23)

As we saw in Lombardo de Caso's La culebra tapó el río, the child's view enables us to accept indigenous magico-religious belief more readily. Castellanos comments on Balún-canán that, "este mundo infantil es muy semejante al mundo de los indígenas . . . Las mentalidades de la niña y de los indígenas poseen en común varios rasgos que las aproximan".⁴ This does not imply

4. Carballo, "Rosario Castellanos", p.5.

that the Indian is childish. It is, rather, that the child's view, like the Indian's, has not yet acquired the scientific, rational outlook of Western civilization. The interpretation of the wind in animistic terms is an example of this similarity in outlook.

By the time the family comes to set off for Chactajal, leaving the nana behind in their house in Comitán, the bond between child and Indian nana seems to be very strong. After the nana's prayers, the niña clings to her, unwilling to leave, "cogida de su tzec, llorando porque no quiero irme" (p.64). Even although she does leave, the nana's last words in the chapter reassert the bond: "Mira que con lo que he rezado es como si hubiera yo vuelto, otra vez, a amamantarte" (p.64).

Interspersed with this growing identification with the nana and her Indian world-view, we have the niña's growing awareness of the tension between Indian and ladino. While there is an indication of tension in the nana's opening tale, it is Chapter 4 which brings the niña to her first concrete realization of the conflict. Here the nana blames the brujos of Chactajal for "una llaga rosada, tierna, que le desfigura la rodilla" and asserts to the child that this suffering is inflicted on her, "Porque he sido crianza de tu casa. Porque quiero a tus padres y a Mario y a ti" (p.16). In addition she explains: "Es malo querer a los que mandan, a los que poseen" (p.16). For the first time, the niña then sees her father as "el que manda, el que posee" (p.16). In the face of this revelation her identification with the Indians is indubitable for she retreats to the kitchen to be amongst them. Furthermore, her last, pensive words in the chapter put the blame

firmly on the side of the ladinos, of which she is one: "Una llaga que nosotros le habremos enconado" (p.17).

Another vivid image of the brutal conflict is that of the mutilated Indian, brought from Chactajal, who dies at the house. "Lo mataron porque era de la confianza de tu padre" (p.32), the nana tells the niña. The conflict is also evident here in the assertion about the Indians that, "Otros ya no quieren tener patrón" (p.32). The symbol of the mutilated Indian comes to a climax at the end of Chapter 13 where the niña associates him the image of the crucified Christ: "es igual al indio que llevaron macheteado a nuestra casa" (p.43), thus clearly casting the Indian in the role of innocent victim.

Alternating with these vivid images (Chapters 4, 10, and 13) of Indian-ladino conflict, seen through the eyes of the niña, we have a more objective indication of the tension at a more political level in Chapters 8, 11, and 14). In Chapter 8, Tío David's estribillo hints at the changes that are on the way:

Ya se acabó el baldillito
de los rancheros de acá . . .

-¿Qué es el baldillito, tío David?

-Es la palabra chiquita para decir baldío. El trabajo que los indios tienen la obligación de hacer y que los patrones no tienen la obligación de pagar. (p.25)

In Chapter 11, in conversation overheard by the niña, Zoraida's friend Amalia comes out with another revealing comment: "Dicen que va a venir el agrarismo, que están quitando las fincas a sus dueños y que los indios se alzarón contra los patrones" (p.35).

In Chapter 14, Jaime Rovelos's son's letter tells of a law to make the hacendados provide schooling for the Indians, ideas with which the son alone sympathizes. Immense prejudice against the Indian

is evident at this point in Zoraida's anti-Cárdenas outburst, harsh words which the niña and her brother protect the nana from by shutting the door:

Es que no los conoce; es que nunca se ha acercado a ellos ni ha sentido cómo apestan a suciedad y a trago. Es que nunca les ha hecho un favor para que le devolvieran ingratitud. No les ha encargado una tarea para que mida su haraganería. ¡Y son tan hipócritas, y tan solapados y tan falsos! (p.46)

César Argüellos's less violent reaction is to suggest a way of satisfying the letter of the law but not its spirit, a way that becomes evident in Chapter 17 when he asks his brother's bastard son, Ernesto, to act as teacher if need be.

In the midst of these chapters with their vivid images of the conflict alternating with information about Cárdenas's land reform plans, instrumental in increasing the assertive stance of the Indians, we have a personal instance of Indian self-assertion, witnessed by the niña. This is seen in the pride and defiance of an Indian at the fairground in Chapter 12 who refuses to be belittled by the ladino and even breaks the formal language barrier (as does Felipe in Part II when we first see him):

-Oílo vos, este indio igualado. Está hablando castilla.
¿Quién le daría permiso?
Porque hay reglas. El español es privilegio nuestro.
(pp.38-39)

It is this much more assertive stance which begins to replace the Indian's apparent acceptance of the status quo evident in the nana's two tales (Chapters 6 and 9). The dzulúm was believed to have carried off Angélica, an orphan taken in by the niña's ancestors, who inherited the estate and was generous to the Indians: "tan apacible y considerada para nosotros, los que la servíamos" (p.20). Since no Angélica is ever mentioned

in the family, it is likely that she represents Otilia, described in the document in Chapter 18 as "una huérfana, una recogida" (p.59), who likewise seemed to have a generous attitude towards the Indian population. As after Otilia a new era began, with the land split up amongst her sons, it is possible that the tale of Angélica and the dzulúm is a mythical rationalization by the Chactajal Indians of the disappearance of anyone well disposed to them in the Argüello family.

The tale of the origins of Man again seems to uphold the status quo in the existence of rich and poor. According to the legend, having failed to make men out of clay or wood, on a third attempt the lords of the sky produced an unresponsive man of gold. Finally men were made out of flesh and populated the earth. The men of flesh fed the man of gold, evoking some response in him, much to the satisfaction of the lords, who called the man of gold the rich man and the man of flesh the poor man. Despite this justification of the existence of rich and poor, the tale does also establish a relationship between them where the rich must help the poor: "Por eso dice nuestra ley que ningún rico puede entrar al cielo si un pobre no lo lleva de la mano" (p.30).

Both tales, then, encourage the Indian to accept his inferior status. While the first merely implies the disappearance of benevolent ladinos the second, taking a step forward, does assert the dependence of the ladino on the Indian. It is from this that we can go a stage further to the assertive stance seen later in Part I and much more so in Part II.

As if to put into perspective the need for reform in the Indian-ladino relationship we have the document written by an

Indian, telling the history of Chactajal, which the niña discovers in Chapter 18, just before preparations begin for the journey there. César later asserts that it was ordered to be written "para probar la antigüedad de nuestras propiedades y su tamaño" (p.82). However, it is equally effective as the story of the life of the Indians under the Argüello family: "Nos preservaron para la humillación, para las tareas serviles. Nos apartaron como a la cizaña del grano. Buenos para arder, buenos para ser pisoteados, así fuimos hechos, hermanitos míos" (p.58). The ladinos, or cashlanes, "los instrumentos de nuestro castigo" are "Altaneros, duros de ademán, fuertes de voz" (p.57). Such background, provided by the document, puts into perspective the Indian-ladino tension and the Indian's eventual response in Part II.

Interspersed with the increasing manifestations of the tension between Indian and ladino we have also an atmosphere of growing premonition, a sense of the storm to come. A hint of this in the context of the niña's life occurs with the teacher's solemn words at the school in Chapter 3 concerning "los peligrosos tiempos que nos ha tocado vivir" (p.14). After the niña's realization of the conflict in Chapter 4, Chapter 5 reiterates the premonition more vividly in the pana's words upon the cancellation of the circus: "-No es tiempo de diversiones, niña. Siente: en el aire se huele la tempestad" (p.19).

Through the niña's sensibility, with her nightmare in Chapter 10, we have an even more forceful premonition of the violent storm to come, this time — as her nightmare is derived from seeing the mutilated Indian — directly connected to the Indian-ladino conflict. She has a premonition of Ernesto's death

in a vision of Zoraida taking his crippled mother her breakfast: "la entraña sanguinolenta y todavía palpitante de una res recién sacrificada" (p.32). She sees her father, unaware that he is surrounded by "esqueletos sonrientes, con una sonrisa silenciosa y sin fin" (pp.32-33), perhaps evocative of the generations of Indians who hope to be avenged on the Argüello family. Further bloodshed and death is suggested in her vision of the nana, oblivious to her as she washes the family's clothes in "un río rojo y turbulento" (p.33).

Between this and the end of the part we have Doña Pastora's offer of information on where to cross the border, "Para cuando sea necesario huir" (p.49). As the family draw near to Chactajal the penultimate chapter indicates the beginning of the outburst: "Las cosas que están sucediendo en estos ranchos no son para que las presencien las criaturas" (p.71). Finally, again in a dream, the niña hears the comforting voice of her nana addressing her with words of warning relating to the Indian-ladino conflict:

Duerme ahora. Sueña que esta tierra dilatada es tuya; que esquilas rebaños numerosos y pacíficos; que abunda la cosecha en las trojes. Pero cuida de no despertar con el pie cogido en el cepo y la mano clavada contra la puerta. Como si tu sueño hubiera sido iniquidad. (p.74)

It is in the central section that we come to see the conflict between Indian and ladino come to a head, culminating near the end of the part when the Indians refuse to comply with César's orders and the sugar-cane press is set on fire, presumably by one of them. We see the build-up to this in a progressive rise in the strength of the Indians in conjunction with a symbolic degeneration on the part of the ladino. It is this which acts as the principal structuring device of Part II.

Initially we detect a certain material degeneration on the ladino side. The trapiche is "del modelo más antiguo" (p.86); the house is run down: "En el cuarto de Ernesto había goteras y sobre las vigas del techo corrían, toda la noche, las ratas y los tlacuaches" (p.87); Zoraida notices how delapidated the furniture is: "Estas mecedoras de mimbre ya están muy viejas. ¡Y cómo las ha comido la polilla!" (p.88).

Against this background we witness the first advance of the Indian: Felipe comes to the house to ask César, "en español", about the teacher and the school, "Para que se cumpla la ley" (p.99). Nor is he perturbed by the reply that the Indians will have to build the school. The other Indians lack confidence at this stage but are convinced by Felipe so that the next we hear of them (Chapter 7) is Felipe's account of the building of the school. The visit of the inspector agrario gives them a further boost for, as well as advising them to ask for the classes to begin, "Les dijo que ya no tenían patrón. Que ellos eran los dueños del rancho, que no estaban obligados a trabajar para nadie" (p.136).

As the Indians rise to the crest of the wave, on the part of the ladinos a picture of multiple degeneracy emerges, especially in moral concerns. Between Zoraida and César there is tension, often breaking out in cutting and quarrelsome remarks. Also there is an unsatisfactory secret relationship which develops between young Ernesto the bastard and César's frustrated spinster cousin, Matilde, resulting in an unwanted pregnancy and a suicidal attitude in Matilde. Ernesto's position as a teacher is ludicrous for he speaks no Tzeltal and the Indian children no Spanish. In

addition, he takes to getting totally drunk in front of the class and on one occasion hits a child. It is Ernesto's uselessness as a teacher which provokes one of the main steps forward for the Indians: they refuse to work for César until a new teacher is brought. Although César forces them to work at gunpoint — another indication of ladino deterioration — the ladinos do not really gain the upper hand again for in the next chapter, the sixteenth, the fire breaks out, destroying the trapiche.

Owing to the timeless, mythical tone of the narrative at the opening of the chapter describing the fire, contrasting the exploitative attitude of the ladino with the tranquil nature of the original Indian inhabitants, the impression is given that the fire is the final outcome of age-old exploitation. A certain inevitability of this outcome is also suggested by the reference to the fire using the definite article from the beginning. Although the house is saved by rain, insofar as the trapiche is destroyed the Indians have proved their power, destroying the symbol of their exploitation. The ladinos are reduced to uneasiness and fear, reaching their lowest ebb so far at the close of Part II with the death of Ernesto at the hands of the Indians, Matilde's confession of having aborted the child, and the family's departure for Comitán.

In Part III we return to the niña as first-person narrator, bringing a more personal emphasis, especially towards the end with her brother's death, for which she feels a certain guilt. Despite this more personal focus, clear indications emerge in this last part as regards the position of the Indian and the ladino ruling class and so it forms a conclusion to the events in the central

part.

The question of Mario's death provides the narrative thread of Part III. Early chapters (1 and 2), with their concentration on Ernesto's death, form a suitable introduction to this theme. Immediately following, in Chapter 4, is the nana's prophecy of Mario's death and of the end of the Argüello family line. From here on there is a relentless insistence on the inevitability of such an outcome, every chapter in some way bringing his death a step closer. At the end of Chapter 5, Jaime Rovelos refuses to deny the possibility of Mario's death while, in the following chapter, Tía Romelia affirms that the brujos can harm people, "Sobre todo a los niños" (p.238). In Chapter 7 Zoraida "confirms" her fears with Tarot cards in the house of la tullida, Ernesto's mother: "Las cartas cayeron al suelo, boca arriba, sin secreto. Y todas eran espadas, espadas, espadas" (p.243). She tries to avert the danger by taking Mario to a priest only to be told by him that the brujos are men and "Todos los hombres pueden hacer daño" (p.250). In Chapter 10 Zoraida decides to have Mario prepared for First Communion, an idea he rejects in the next chapter after a story told by one of the children's cargadoras. The children then steal the key to the chapel in Chapter 12 in a bid to evade taking Communion and in the next chapter Mario's illness begins, apparently brought on by guilt and fear. Thus it is ironically Zoraida's very attempt to safeguard against his death which seems to provoke his illness.

The following chapter brings a useless prescription from the doctor; the one after a revealing proposal from Tío David to the niña: "Date cuenta de que la casa se está derrumbando.

¡Vámonos antes de que nos aplaste!" (p.274). We then see Mario's unwillingness to have the priest in his room (Chapter 16) followed by the niña's daydream, underlining the danger her brother is in: "Pero Mario no puede correr; está enfermo. Y yo no puedo esperar. No, me marcharé yo sola, me salvaré yo sola" (pp.278-79). After his death in Chapter 18 and the niña's resulting feelings of guilt in that and subsequent chapters because of her part in the episode with the key, we eventually come, at the end of Chapter 22, to the graveyard where the names of all the Argüellos buried there are listed.

Mario's death is a clear indication of the end of the Argüello's power. The epigraph to Part III, like the preceding epigraphs, has, as Meinhardt rightly suggests, a double-edged irony.⁵ Although taken from Indian lore it is relevant to the ladino ruling class too: "Y muy pronto comenzaron para ellos los presagios . . . ¡Moriréis! ¡Os perderéis! Y soy vuestro augur" (p.217).

A further indication of ladino degeneration in the chapters leading up to Mario's death is Zoraida's rootless superstition. The diversity of the powers she seems to believe in — brujos, cards, the Church, the doctor — and the speed with which she outwardly scorns each in turn reveals nothing of a genuine belief. As the priest comments: "Me traen a las criaturas para que yo las bautice, no porque quieran hacerlas cristianas, pues nadie jamás piensa en Cristo, sino por aquello del agua bendita que sirve

5. Warren Lee Meinhardt, "The Mexican Indianist Novel: 1910-1960" (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of California, Berkeley, 1965), p.170.

para ahuyentar a los nahuales y los malos espíritus" (p.249).

The final disintegration of the power of the original ladino ruling class is in no doubt in Part III. There is, however, no equally definite corresponding rise in Indian fortunes. This emerges from details concerning the nana. Early in the part, the child still identified with her nana as we see in her eagerness to give her a present of riverside pebbles. The nana's pleasure, however, is spoiled by hearing they are from Chactajal and they are left behind when she leaves. Zoraida's brutal dismissal of the nana after her prophecy degrades her: "continuaba en el suelo, deshecha, abandonada como una cosa sin valor" (p.232). The disappearance from the story of the nana — our first link with the indigenous world — suggests that the possible bond between Indian and ladino has been broken, especially when on the last page the niña thinks she has found her nana but is mistaken: "Nunca, aunque yo la encuentre, podré reconocer a mi nana. Hace tanto tiempo que nos separaron. Además, todos los indios tienen la misma cara" (p.291). Seemingly, the nana has been absorbed into the faceless mass, perhaps indicating a rejection on the part of Castellanos, like Pozas, of the process of acculturation favoured by the Mexican government.

Not only is the possible bond between Indian and ladino severed, and Indian fortunes low; there is also the hint of a new rising middle class: "gentes ricas . . . pero no se les considera de buenas familias" (p.289). Of a representative family we hear that, "Ninguno de ellos sabe leer" (p.290). This indication of the rise to power of a new and probably worse ruling class brings to mind the pessimistic circularity of Azuela's Los de abajo,

seen in so many Mexican novels of the failed Revolution. The mention of the new powerful class in Balún-canán may emphasize the fall of the original los de arriba; it does not, however, hold out any hope for the original los de abajo of the novel: the Indians.

Looking back on the three parts which lead to this pessimistic outcome, we can appreciate the unity within each. Also of importance, however, especially in a novel like this one with a shift in narrative point of view between parts, is the linkage between these parts (one of the less successful features of López y Fuentes's Los peregrinos inmóviles).

Castellanos opted for an omniscient point of view for the events of the central section because of the limitations of the seven-year-old's point of view. She herself, in retrospect, criticized the shift on more than one account:

Este salto brusco no sólo se advierte por el cambio de personas, sino también, por el estilo. Abandoné el lirismo por una prosa más eficaz y más dinámica. Pero esto quita unidad a la novela y produce bastante desconcierto en los lectores, y creo que es la falla fundamental de su escritura.⁶

It is perhaps due to Castellanos's own self-critical stance that other critics have taken up this point as Balún-canán's main shortcoming for not all critics writing before her celebrated interview with Carballo in 1962, where she first expressed such opinions, seem to share such criticism. Alfredo Hurtado comments on the easy transfer from first to third person⁷ while Rodríguez Chicharro,

6. Rhoda Dybvig, "Rosario Castellanos: premiada y odiada" (Master's thesis, UNAM, Cursos Temporales, 1965), p.32.

7. "Balún-canán: Rosario Castellanos", Estaciones: Revista Literaria de México, 2, no.8 (Winter 1957), 481-82.

although assuming that a change in narrative point of view diminishes the unity of the novel, asserts that the style of all three parts, nonetheless, is uniform. Furthermore, he is conscious that, while Castellanos might have written it all in the first person, this would have altered the bias of the story, limiting it exclusively to the author's childhood memories.⁸

A simple shift of narrative point of view between parts of a novel is hardly enough to disconcert the modern reader. Besides, as an examination will reveal, the novel's unity is not impaired, neither by this shift nor for stylistic reasons.

As will have become evident, the three parts of the novel correspond to Exposition, Development, and Conclusion in relation to the subject matter of the Indian and his uneasy relationship with the ladino. This provides an overall unity, linking the three parts. There are, in addition, plenty details in the text that provide linkage, especially in the transfer from Part I to Part II. This is the most likely to provoke "desconcierto" for Part III brings a return to a place and characters already familiar from Part I.

In Part I occasional references to Chactajal and the appearance of some of the Indians from there introduce us to the family estate, an introduction which culminates with the document on Chapter 18. The journey there fills the latter chapters of Part I while Part II takes place there. Several references in the first chapter of Part II, as César shows Ernesto round the estate,

8. César Rodríguez Chicharro, "Rosario Castellanos: Balún-canán", La Palabra y el Hombre, no.9 (1959), 61-67 (pp.61-62).

form a link with the document: in particular, references to his ancestors. These are also mentioned at the end of Part III in the graveyard, lending further coherence.

It is the document in Part I that first introduces the importance of the male line of the family for the niña is scolded for meddling with "la herencia de Mario, Del varón" (p.60). A brief insight into Zoraida early in Part II reiterates this importance: "Gracias a Dios tengo mis dos hijos. Y uno es varón" (p.92). The full significance of this finally comes to the fore in Part III with Mario's illness and death: "Es el único varón. Y es necesario que se logre" (p.242); "¡No en el varón!" (p.250).

Important figures in Part II are Ernesto and Matilde, whose relationship develops in that part. However, they are introduced before the end of Part I while the matter of Ernesto's death lingers on into Part III, thus involving all three parts. Ernesto's death itself is a concern shared by all three parts for, while it occurred in Part II and was broken to his mother, la tullida, in Part III, the niña's macabre dream of the "res sacrificada" (p.32) in Part I anticipates both the death and its revelation to his mother.

Stylistically, too, the parts have features in common. While the overall tone of the novel varies, the variations are common to all the parts. The atmosphere of myth and legend which we find in Part I in the nana's tales and the document re-emerges in Part II: as if carrying on the document of Part I, Felipe writes a document in Part II (Chapter 7) telling of the construction of the school. Also recalling the tone of the document and the

exploitation of the Indians narrated there is the beginning of Chapter 16 where the fire occurs, before the narrative melts into the present with César's overseeing the working of the trapiche. Marking a parallel with the nana's tales, though more ominous and fitting for the part, is the tale told by one of the cargadoras in Part III.

Another feature which tends to diminish any stylistic contrast and lessens the difference in narrative point of view between parts is that the niña as narrator does not always act as a subjective filter of events. We also have incorporated into the text in Part I conversations which she witnesses (Zoraida and Amalia; Zoraida and Doña Pastora; César and Ernesto) largely uncommented by her. These become more frequent as Part I proceeds. The journey to Chactajal at the end of the part also gives an opportunity for the niña to come close to being an omniscient narrator as she simply relates what happened. All this provides a smooth transfer to Part II's third-person narration.

The return from the third to the first person of Part III is similarly managed. Part III begins with a narration of events interspersed with conversation where we gradually become conscious of the niña as narrator. While including some insight into the niña the early chapters of Part III also include a substantial proportion of "objective" material, presumably overheard by her. The subjective focus increases subsequently with the question of first Communion and Mario's illness and death.

It is the third-person omniscient narration in Part II that enables Castellanos to present to us fully-drawn Indian characters outside the ladino context. The nana, presented through the first-

person narrator, does not have her own inner dimension but, rather, is brought to life by the niña's relationship with her. Opting for depth rather than breadth, Castellanos concentrates on only two Indian characters in Part II, Felipe and Juana, the rest of the Indians being largely an unpersonalized group with a few figures identified by name.

It is Felipe we meet first when, as a bold spokesman, he stands apart from the crowd as an individual. He stands out again as leader on his return to the paraje when he controls the support of his people and cuts off their retreat into fear and suspicion. Felipe's strength and willpower is pitted against César's which tends to place him on a par with César. Indeed, on various occasions, Felipe has the upper hand on César through his sheer unperturbable tenacity. This hold is only broken when César threatens violence: "Al que no se levante lo clareo aquí mismo a balazos" (p.191). Even here, nonetheless, Felipe is still in control of his fellow Indians.

Felipe is distinguished from the other Indians because, during time spent in Tapachula, he has learned to speak, read, and write Spanish and has met President Cárdenas. However, while Felipe's experience among the ladinos sets him apart as an individual and gives him the capacity to become leader, it does not deprive him of his Indian identity and world-view. It is the Indian outlook we detect in his faith in the magical power of Cárdenas's handshake: "Había estrechado su mano, pero éste era su secreto, su fuerza" (p.105). His Indian identity is also evident in his dedication to his people: he returned to tell them of Cárdenas's good news and to act as "hermano mayor" to lead his

people out of bondage. The link with the document in Part I with Felipe's writing of the one relating the building of the school also tends to place this task in a wider, timeless setting.

While Felipe sees his task in social terms and is confident that it can be achieved through human effort, we also see in him a religious interpretation of the ladinos' power over the Indian, again underlining his indigenous cosmovisión: the Indian deities are free to unleash suffering on their people whereas "los blancos tienen así a su Dios, clavado de pies y manos para impedir que su cólera se desencadene" (p.106).

Felipe is clearly a figure of importance. Nonetheless, we cannot help feeling that his role -- that of Indian leader, the man who will break the hold of the ladino on his people -- tends to dominate his character. His wife, Juana, is a more complex creation with an inner dimension. It is perhaps because she is a woman, like the author herself, that Castellanos has achieved greater success with Juana. Indeed, it is a woman's problem which gives Juana her major universal trait: she is barren. Better than Felipe, Juana exemplifies Castellanos's capacity to get to grips with an Indian character in a way which is equal to her treatment of the ladino.

Various parallels between Juana and Zoraida are of note in this connection: for example, the importance to both of children in marriage. In a section of the text written in an evocative estilo indirecto libre we hear that Juana's lack of children would have been sufficient reason for Felipe to cast her off, though in fact he does not: "Sólo por caridad Felipe la conservaba junto a él. No por obligación. Porque Dios la había castigado

al no permitirle tener hijos" (p.174). Zoraida, although not barren, is unable to have more than her present two children and these, she recognizes, are what holds her marriage together. This we learn by interior monologue: "Después de que nació Mario quedé muy mala. Ni un hijo más, me sentenció el doctor Mazariegos. Lástima. Yo hubiera querido tener muchos hijos. Alegran la casa. César dice que para qué queremos más. Pero yo sé que si no fuera por los dos que tenemos ya me habría dejado" (pp.91-92).

Zoraida looks on César, this "señor tan reconcentrado y tan serio" (p.91), with a certain fear and has done so since she first knew him: "Pero me daba miedo casarme con un señor tan alto, tan formal y que ya se había amañado a vivir solo" (p.90). Juana, too, fears her husband and is disconcerted by his character since he has been in Tapachula: "Pero temía a este hombre que le había devuelto la costa, amargo y áspero como la sal, perturbador, inquieto como el viento" (p.108). The result is that in both cases the women are unable to establish the deeper kind of communication with their husbands.

Even in the potentially costumbrista question of courtship and marriage, Castellanos, while maintaining a personal focus on Juana which plays down the details of custom, introduces a parallel with Zoraida. We are given an insight into Juana's predicament, looking back on happier times, as she briefly goes over in her mind her early relationship with Felipe, again presented in estilo indirecto libre: "El baile en la ermita cuando Felipe la escogió tirándole el pañuelo colorado sobre la falda"; "Los tratos entre las dos familias. El año de prueba que había pasado cada uno

sirviendo a los padres del otro". The details of this typical año de prueba are highly personal: "Ella se había esmerado, pues Felipe estaba bien para marido suyo. Cuando molía el maíz la masa del posol salía más fina y más sabrosa. (Secretamente mezclaba los granos de almendra que compró a los cusitaleros y que trajo escondidos entre su camisa. Pero eso no lo sabían sus suegros cuando alababan su mano)" (pp.106-07).

A parallel with Zoraida, also offering a blend of customary procedure and personal emphasis places Juana, again, on a par with Zoraida, playing down any exotic connotations in the above: "Por eso cuando César se fijó en mí y habló con mamá porque tenía buenas intenciones vi el cielo abierto El vestido de novia era precioso, bordado de chaquira como entonces se usaba. César lo encargó a Guatemala" (pp.90-91).

There is another occasion upon which a typical custom is exploited to provide an insight into Juana. This is when she takes up a broom and puts it behind the door, seemingly implying that her visitor is highly unwelcome. The nature of the custom is of no great significance and is certainly not introduced per se. Rather, the action serves to give an insight into Juana's character:

¡Se había atrevido a hacer aquello! Juana, la sumisa, la que era como una sombra sin voluntad, se había atrevido a echar de su casa a María! Ahora, las otras mujeres sabrían a qué atenerse. Y si tenían asuntos que arreglar con Felipe lo buscarían fuera de su jacal. (p.178)

Juana is on the point of making another attempt with the broom when a group of Indians comes to consult Felipe. This time, however, it is her submissive nature which dominates:

Porque Juana sintió sobre ella la mirada implacable de Felipe. Se fue empequeñeciendo delante del hombre. Y su

fuerza la abandonó. Juana fue derrumbándose hasta quedar de rodillas en el suelo, sacudida como un arbusto por un viento de sollozos. (p.182)

It is the dichotomy in Juana between her submissive nature — often regarded as typical of the Indian, especially the woman — and her desire to break out against everything which oppresses her (barrenness, María's taunts, Felipe's distance from her) which gives Juana psychological depth and vividness, much as a similar set-up did with María Manuela in Rubín's El callado dolor de los tzotziles.

Occasional details of Indian custom give Juana the trappings of Indian identity. Perhaps more important to her Indian identity, however, is a certain symbolism in her central dichotomy which can be taken in relation to the Indian in general. Juana's usually submissive nature corresponds to the Indians' acceptance of the status quo over the generations while her self-assertion in María's presence is suggestive of their uprising. The last we see of Juana, however, is a return to submission, which perhaps anticipates the final implications of Part III despite the momentary triumph of the Indians at the end of Part II.

The sections dealing with our two main Indian characters, Juana and Felipe, admittedly, form only a small part of this novel. Most of the characters are ladinos and most of the action takes place in a ladino setting. There is, however, a constant undercurrent of concern with the Indian and his position throughout the novel which makes it very recognizably indigenista. We are introduced in Part I, largely by hearsay and through the niña's sensibility, to the Indian world-view and to the Indian-ladino conflict. In the central part we see the conflict

in action and come face to face with Indian characters. Furthermore, we find that the actions and character of the most profound of these -- Juana -- have symbolic implications which anticipate the message of the concluding part. This, though it offers little in Indian character-presentation (the nana leaves after her ominous prophecy), provides a suggestive interpretation of the Indian's position.

OFICIO DE TINIEBLAS

In contrast to her first novel, it is, in many ways, a traditional novelistic approach Castellanos uses in Oficio de tinieblas (1962), with the following justification: "La historia es, de por sí, complicada y confusa para agregarle dificultades arquitectónicas y estilísticas".⁹ For this reason, Marta Portal terms it a "novela galdosiana, al estilo tradicional del siglo XIX".¹⁰

It should be emphasized, however, that the more traditional mould Castellanos chose to use in Oficio de tinieblas by no means implies a regressive step for indigenista literature. After all, Portal is clearly referring to the nineteenth-century novel in Europe, the heyday of the novel in its country of origin. We could have little to complain about had Spanish-American novelists of the 1930s and 1940s been able to penetrate the Indian world with the skill of a Galdós. In fact, Oficio de tinieblas benefits

9. Carballo, "Rosario Castellanos", p.5.

10. "Narrativa indigenista mexicana de mediados de siglo", Cuadernos Hispanoamericanos, no.298 (April 1975), 196-207 (p.199).

greatly from certain features we might regard as characteristic of the nineteenth-century European novel: in particular, its detailed examination of a whole spectrum of society, its complex but balanced structure, and also its exploitation of various modes of discourse in order to convey the inner depths of the characters. Such nineteenth-century apportations are responsible, in part, for the success Oficio de tinieblas has achieved in the indigenista genre.

Oficio de tinieblas is a much longer and more complex novel than Balún-canán, offering a much greater profundity than the earlier novel in its insight into Indian characters and the indigenous world-view, an insight of especial importance in its exposition of the conflict between Indian and ladino. While Balún-canán involves, as Beatriz Reyes Nevares suggests, a "toma de conciencia" on the part of the author,¹¹ in Oficio de tinieblas we have the author's mature interpretation expressed with the literary skill of a practised novelist.

The events of Oficio de tinieblas have a historical basis in the Chamula uprising of 1867.¹² Castellanos, however, chose to sacrifice historical veracity for artistic reasons and transposed events to the Cárdenas era for, as she said, "me di cuenta que la lógica histórica es absolutamente distinta a la lógica literaria".¹³ It is such a concern above all with literary

11. Rosario Castellanos (Mexico, 1976), pp.43-44.

12. A detailed résumé of these events is given by María del Carmen Millán, "En torno a Oficio de tinieblas", Anuario de Letras, UNAM, 3 (1963), 287-99 (pp.292-93)

13. Carballo, "Rosario Castellanos", p.5.

considerations that guarantees Oficio de tinieblas success, as Rhoda Dybvig underlines: "le importa mucho más crear una obra de ficción que presentar un cuadro fiel a la historia" (p.110).

Castellanos manages to give this lengthy novel with its complicated web of events a coherent structure. She is able to explore Indian character in depth, simultaneously using the process of interiorization to underline the structure and assure our sympathy with the Indian. She succeeds also in penetrating the indigenous world-view and suggesting its implications regarding the future for the Indians on a socio-political level. While inevitably in a novel of this complexity there will be a degree of overlap, it is these areas which we shall be concerned with: structural considerations, character presentation, and indigenous world-view.

Structural Considerations

Oficio de tinieblas examines the whole social spectrum in the area of Chiapas around Ciudad Real (now San Cristóbal de Las Casas), distributing the forty chapters of the novel more or less equitably between the two conflicting worlds: Indian and ladino. In this broad focus Castellanos takes the approach of her Peruvian contemporary, José María Arguedas, who asserted the following: "no se puede conocer al indio si no se conoce a las demás personas que hacen del indio lo que es; . . . es necesario conocer el mundo total humano, todo el contexto social".¹⁴

14. Recopilación de textos sobre José María Arguedas, edited by Juan Larco (Havanna, 1976), p.58.

"Todo el contexto social" is exactly what Castellanos presents. Amongst Indians and ladinos there are men, women, and children; there are those in authority and those subject to others; there are those involved in politics and those in religion; there are those who are respected and revered and those who are rejected; there are those who are "normal" and those who are "odd".

Amongst the Indians we have Pedro Winiktón: young, with some education, and in a position of authority; Catalina, Pedro's wife: barren but respected for her magic powers; Rosendo, el martoma, a drunken dignitary; Felipa, Rosendo's sharp-tongued and argumentative wife; Marcela, Felipa's daughter, taken in by Catalina after her rape; Lorenzo, Catalina's mad brother, married off to Marcela for convenience; Domingo, the product of Marcela's rape, brought up as Catalina and Pedro's son; Xaw Ramírez Paciencia, the Indian sacristán who supports a hybrid pagan-Christian religion in the absence of any ladino priest.

Amongst the ladinos we have an equally varied mixture: Leonardo Cifuentes, the upstart landholder with political ambitions; Isabel, his rejected wife; Idolina, her sick daughter by a former husband; Teresa, Idolina's faithful Indian nana; Doña Mercedes Solórzano, employed by Cifuentes and acting largely as his pimp; Fernando Ulloa, the land reform representative, a newcomer rejected by Ciudad Real society as a communist who acts against landowning interests; Julia, his wife (or perhaps lover), later Cifuentes's lover and Idolina's friend, trying hard to establish herself in the closed society of Ciudad Real; César, another outsider, whom Ulloa takes on as his assistant. We have also the Bishop, an eager young priest, Manuel Mandujano, and his sister.

Despite the broad focus and the equal distribution of chapters on matters Indian and ladino, it is still clearly the Indian upon whom the main emphasis lies. This is made evident by the initial insistence on the Indian side in the opening six chapters. The closing chapters, too, leave our attention on the Indian for the penultimate chapter looks at the Indian in defeat after the rebellion while the final one closes with the nana's mitificación of the events involving the rebellion. Furthermore, it is an Indian character, Catalina, who is given the greatest analysis from within (a point to which we shall return).

The two worlds we witness in conflict in this novel are, of course, not taken in isolation from each other but are bound together by various means. One of these is the use of personajes puentes, moving between the Indian and the ladino worlds. The first of these we meet is Doña Mercedes Solórzano. She speaks Tzotzil and, therefore, as Leonardo's pimp she can gain Marcela's confidence. She also passes unsuspected trading amongst the Indians when sent by Cifuentes as a spy. Another bilingual character, this time from the Indian side, is Xaw, the sacristán who betrays the pagan worship of the Indians to the ladinos. Xaw's opposite number amongst the ladinos, Manuel Mandujano, the new priest sent to San Juan Chamula, is another link in the religious sphere. It is he in person, acting on behalf of ladino interests (both religious and political) who tries to suppress the worship of the pagan gods.

The most important bilingual character is, however, Pedro Winiktón. Although superficially linked to the religious sphere through his wife Catalina and his adopted son Domingo, Pedro

functions primarily in a political capacity. His fluent Spanish and acquaintance with the government plans for land reform combined with his desperate desire for justice make him the ideal link with Ulloa, who is another link: a ladino moving frequently amongst the Indians and acting in their interest.

The nana is an Indian figure who lives amongst the ladinos and, as such, brings an element of the Indian outlook in her relationship with Idolina into the Cifuentes household. However, she also acts as a link between the two sides in relation to the action: having left her post with the ladinos for a while and lived again among the Indians, on her return she reveals in a story to Idolina that the Indians have for the second time turned to worship of pagan gods. This information is transmitted by Idolina to Julia and thus to Cifuentes.

The integration of the two worlds is not based only on these personajes puentes. In fact, the whole plot is an intricate web of events which binds Indian and ladino affairs together and intertwines political, religious and personal levels. Leonardo Cifuentes, who because of his desire for power spearheads ladino reaction against possible Indian unrest, has been influential in crystallizing the final Indian uprising for it was he who engendered Domingo, "El que nació cuando el eclipse", whose crucifixion gives the Indians their own "Christ" and the confidence that they are on a par with the ladino. Pedro, in his fight for overall justice -- which he associates with the land problem ever since his year in debt peonage to earn money to feed Domingo -- assists Ulloa, unaware that Ulloa is the antagonist both politically and sexually of Cifuentes, the power-hungry ladino leader. Pedro is also

unaware that he himself is ultimately up against the blood father of his adopted son, the perpetrator of the injustice incarnate he had found forced into his home when Catalina took in Marcela because she had been raped by a ladino.

Catalina's actions, based on personal motivation, come also to influence the Indian-ladino conflict. Not only does she take in Marcela and bring up Domingo as her son, which consoles her as a barren wife, but also, deprived of Domingo, she reasserts the old gods. The religious gathering around these gods, as well as being taken as idolatry by the Church, is seen by some conflict-hungry ladinos as having political motivation. Again fulfilling her personal needs for attention, Catalina remoulds the gods when they are destroyed, an action which culminates in the murder of the priest, Manuel Mandujano when he interferes (sent by Cifuentes, not only by the Church). Catalina offers Domingo for crucifixion to satisfy her personal need to give, but this religious sacrifice gives way to rebellion when the Indians become convinced from Catalina's speech that they are now equal to the ladinos.

Clearly, it is a highly complicated set-up we are dealing with. Castellanos's integration of so many different characters and her inter-relation of action in the many different spheres is indication of her skill in constructing a novel of this length and intricacy of events.

Again of note in this respect is her suggestive Exposition to this complex story. This is provided by the first three chapters (excluding the final paragraph of Chapter 3, which acts as linkage to subsequent events). These chapters introduce the general situation, the Indian world-view, and a number of key

characters while, in addition, giving us an inkling of the possible final outcome for the Indians and their rebellion.

As regards the overall situation, it is evident from this Exposition that the Indian is exploited and misused. We find this first suggested in the opening paragraphs with a legend-like tale in which the Tzotziles, with their gentle language "que se dice también en sueños" are set against "otros hombres" who came "como de otro mundo", speaking a language which was "férreo instrumento de señorío, arma de conquista, punta del látigo de la ley".¹⁵ Moving away from this legend-like opening, the relationship of Indian to ladino on a more immediate everyday plane is amply evoked by the robbery of the Indian women at the end of Chapter 1 by poor mestizas — a robbery fully anticipated by the Indians — and subsequently by the sexual exploitation of the unsuspecting Marcela at the hands of Leonardo Cifuentes.

The evocative opening of Chapter 1 also serves to suggest elements of the Indian world-view. It is a magical one, we gather, from the tale where "San Juan transformó en piedras a todas las ovejas" (p.9). It is also a world-view which has been heavily influenced by Catholicism, as we perceive from the enumeration of the many saints in the church. The syncretic nature of the Indians' belief which emerges in the novel is evident at this early point in their view, for example, of the Cross: "la enorme cruz del Viernes Santo, exigidora de la víctima anual" (p.10),

15. Rosario Castellanos, Oficio de tinieblas, 5th edition (Mexico: Joaquín Mortiz, 1977), p.9. All subsequent references are to this edition.

a detail which prepares us for Domingo's sacrifice. We are also prepared by this passage for the Indians' turning to Catalina's gods for the saints are: "Materia sin virtud que la piedad olvida y el olvido desdeña" (p.10). Moving on into the action in these introductory chapters, we are again made conscious of the magico-religious outlook of the Indians in the women's attitude to Catalina, regarded as having supernatural powers because of her unusual condition of sterility.

These first three chapters introduce us to a fair selection of the key characters too, in particular, Catalina and Pedro. Pedro is put over as a judge and a respected figure: "los demás acudían a él como se acude al hermano mayor" (p.11), which prepares us for his role and justice-seeking outlook to come. A brief insight into Catalina's problem of being barren prepares us not only for her reaction in the face of this problem in later chapters but also introduces us to the inner emphasis we will find particularly in the presentation of Catalina.

With the Indian women's visit to Ciudad Real with their wares we are introduced to Marcela (and later to her mother, Felipa). Through Marcela's experiences in Ciudad Real the reader becomes acquainted with various of the figures from the ladino side whom we will find in interaction with the Indian world. First, Doña Mercedes, who entices Marcela in, then the lecherous Leonardo Cifuentes, presented both in person and through Doña Mercedes's reminiscences about him. Isabel and Idolina are briefly mentioned when the former, as she tends her daughter, hears the commotion of Marcela's departure. Finally, we meet the bishop and Manuel as they attempt to give alms to the bemused

Marcela.

Turning lastly to the anticipation of the eventual outcome which we might detect in these three expository chapters, we can perhaps take Marcela's reaction in this light. She throws the money back in Doña Mercedes's face and smashes the pots she was supposedly being paid for. This is suggestive of the final rebellion of the Indians in the novel: a violent, destructive act which vents their feelings but is of no value as it leaves them no better off — indeed, probably worse — than before. Pedro's final reaction in the face of the injustice Marcela epitomizes can also be related to the final outcome, specifically to the fate of the Indians in the final chapter: defeated and in hiding after the fruitless revenge of the revolt. Even at this early stage, in Chapter 3, Pedro knows that "la injusticia engorda con la venganza" (p.33) and feels hopelessly that, "Es imposible hacer nada" (p.33). Shortly afterwards, we read words which cannot but be related to the final outcome: "Ahora que la derrota estaba consumada Winiktón no quiso más que huir" (p.33).

This carefully measured Exposition, which prepares us for characters, outlook, and events to come yet blends unobtrusively into the main body of the narrative, is a clear indication of Castellanos's literary skill in structuring this novel.

Another feature of paramount importance in the structure of Oficio de tinieblas is the shape and narrative pace of the novel overall. As already stated, we begin the novel with emphasis on the Indian world in the first six chapters. This initial focus, establishing the force, is balanced by nine subsequent chapters which concentrate on the ladino, the counterforce. Just as in the

first six we are occasionally made conscious of the Indians' interaction with the ladino world, so here the Indian world penetrates into the ladino one. This is evident in Idolina's Indian nana and in Manuel Mandujano's posting as the new priest in San Juan Chamula. All of Chapter 10, in fact, involving Manuel, takes place there while Chapter 15 leaves us, with Ulloa and César, yet again among the Indians.

The opening pace is fairly brisk, as is fitting for the beginning of a novel, which must catch our interest: the first five chapters range in length from 6 to 10 pages. A more leisurely pace sets in for Chapters 6 to 15 (all but two of these range from 12 to 17½ pages, and these shorter two occur towards the end of the section). The more leisurely pace and lengthier chapters cater for background to be filled in: Pedro's time as a peon, background and development on the Cifuentes and Ulloa households, Manuel's move to San Juan Chamula, and the introduction of César as Ulloa's assistant.

Although this brings us only to the beginning of Chapter 16 in a novel of forty chapters, in terms of the number of pages this is the mid-point of the novel and marks the first major articulation, after which the pace quickens. The second half of the novel is largely taken up with the cumulative effect of three climaxes involving conflict between the two worlds established in the first half. The last of these climaxes contains the Indians' rebellion.

The first climax concerns the Indians' reassertion of pagan gods. Catalina rediscovers the stone idols and worship of them flourishes. The cave that the idols are in becomes a place of

pilgrimage where Catalina, acting as the gods' medium, apparently transmits good news from the gods of the end of oppression. Xaw betrays this idolatry to the ladinos and the cave is exorcised by Manuel. The whole matter is essentially a religious affair but the Indian women — the only Indians in the village at the time the authorities arrive — are arrested, imprisoned, and accused of plotting. It takes Ulloa's visit to the gobernador in Tuxtla to achieve their release. This first climax, including chapters of Indian, ladino, and mixed emphasis, spans Chapters 16 to 21, shorter and faster-moving chapters than the preceding ladino-oriented ones though not quite so short as the opening chapters of the novel.

Rather than let the narrative sag after this climactic section, Castellanos pushes on most effectively to the second climax: the re-emergence of the pagan gods, the Indians' return to worship of them, and the murder at the hands of the Indians of Mandujano and his supporters. These events cover Chapters 22 to 26. There is a marked increase in pace with chapters of only 3 to 5 pages, the shortest of these dramatically concluding with the priest's murder.

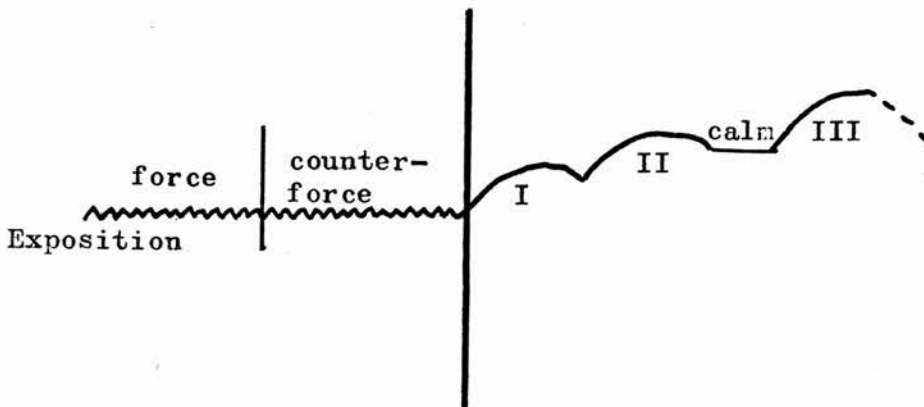
The following five chapters, again blending Indian, ladino, and mixed emphasis, are mostly a little longer again. The pace slows down for this calm before the storm but tension is mounting nonetheless as each side anticipates the conflict to come.

The third and final climax begins with the crucifixion of Domingo and gives way to the Indian rebellion, all of which spans Chapters 32 to 36. These are fairly short and dramatic chapters, of some 6 to 8 pages, with the primary emphasis on the Indians

(though also including one on Leonardo and Julia and concluding with their separation).

The conclusion is brief and unlaboured. Chapters 37 and 38, a little shorter (6 and 5 pages), tie up the ladino's victory, having effectively bypassed the inevitable clash between the Indians and Ciudad Real itself, in order to see matters retrospectively. This is a device used on more than one occasion in this novel but most effective here for it adds to the timelessness of the Indians' defeat. With the status quo re-established with the reported assassination of Ulloa and the collaboration of Cifuentes and the Church, the last two chapters, shorter still (2½ and 4 pages), tie up the fate of the Indians, doomed to eternal defeat in an ahistorical siempre.

What emerges, then, is a carefully managed structure, balancing Indian and ladino emphasis. The first half of the novel (in page terms) is spent laying out and developing the situation, establishing force and counterforce. The second half, with twenty-five chapters as opposed to the more leisurely fifteen of the first half, takes us through three successive climaxes where force and counterforce come into conflict. A diagram serves to sum up this successful structure:



Character Presentation

Let us turn now to the narrative approach to the portrayal of the characters in Oficio de tinieblas. It is Castellanos's care and detail in this that has led Joseph Sommers to call this novel "a study in human landscape".¹⁶ The detail is also underlined by Marta Portal's reference to the "minuciosidad galdosiana" used by Castellanos to penetrate the two worlds.¹⁷ Again, and usually to the benefit of character presentation, we are dealing with several features typical of the nineteenth-century European novel.

There is, however, one "Galdosian" feature that is not entirely successful and that is the use of flashback. Although employed to good purpose in most cases, in the case of César the use of flashback is overdone. Chapter 14 consists largely of this and proves unsatisfactory because the information presented in it is excessive for such a minor character. Also, it depends for its inclusion on a piece of overt authorial intervention: "Pues nada de lo que dijimos es para César Santiago" (p.172). It might have been better all in all had this chapter been compressed to the bare minimum and integrated into either the previous or the following one. Since the section on the ladinos where this chapter occurs is longer than the opening six chapters on the Indians, this would not upset the careful balance between the two worlds.

Jospeh Sommers suggests that flashback is also excessive in

16. "The Indian-oriented Novel in Latin America: New Spirit, New Forms, New Scope", Journal of Inter-American Studies, 6 (1964), 249-65 (p.261).

17. "Narrative indigenista", 204.

the case of Julia and Fernando but since these are major characters, of interest in themselves in a way César is not, this criticism is less valid. Indeed, this is perhaps suggested by the fact that Sommers voices this criticism in only one of his many articles which comment on Oficio de tinieblas.¹⁸

As regards Castellanos's contribution to the indigenista, novel, it should perhaps be pointed out that any over-use of flashback detected by critics in this novel occurs only in the case of ladino characters. Castellanos's portrayal of the Indian emerges unscathed from such criticism.

Flashback — a device of the omniscient narrator — is not the only nor, indeed, the most striking means Castellanos uses in the presentation of her characters. Of much greater note is her frequent avoidance of the omniscient point of view. Rather than relate her characters's thoughts to us in indirect speech, a form where the author as story-teller stands between reader and subject, giving an often remote and potentially monotonous version of what is thought, Castellanos commonly opts for a variety of more immediate and vivid methods. She uses a number of variations of direct discourse, occasionally free direct discourse, and frequently free indirect discourse or estilo indirecto libre. (The latter two are distinguished as "free" by having no introductory punctuation nor introductory phrase.)

With free indirect style in particular, we are again dealing with a valuable feature of the nineteenth-century European novel. Clarín makes good use of this to penetrate the thoughts of his

18. "The Indian-oriented Novel", 263.

characters in La Regenta (1884-85) and Pardo Bazán, too, notably in the case of Don Manuel in Los pazos de Ulloa (1886), uses this means. The technique of free indirect discourse is, of course, a favourite also of the French Naturalists of that time. Galdós, on the other hand, tends to prefer soliloquy expressed as direct discourse for revealing the inner world of his characters and we find this in Oficio de tinieblas also. While these two modes reveal Castellanos's fruitful links with the nineteenth century, her use of free direct style, perhaps a more twentieth-century technique, places her more in the present century.

Very few critics have paid sufficient attention to the variety of often interiorizing narrative modes used by Castellanos in her character presentation in Oficio de tinieblas. Emmanuel Carballo, in fact, apparently fails to perceive her use of the free modes of discourse, mistaking them for authorial remarks:

Hasta ahora [1964] Rosario Castellanos ha sido en cuentos y novelas una ensayista más que una narradora. Su inteligencia la ha traicionado: comenta y juzga con tanta pasión lo que está narrando que se olvida del lector -- y el lector de nuestro tiempo ya no es un ser pasivo, participa como recreador en las historias que le cuentan.¹⁹

The prime exception to the lack of critical comment on the use of these modes of discourse by Castellanos is Leslie Eager Davis, since she dedicates five pages of her Master's thesis to the matter.²⁰ Most other critics, in contrast, simply affirm Castellanos's success in the creation of convincing Indian

19. Diecinueve protagonistas de la literatura mexicana del siglo XX (Mexico, 1965), p.424.

20. "Myth in Oficio de tinieblas" (unpublished Master's thesis, University of Texas, Austin, 1967), pp.47-51.

characters, accompanying this with a passing mention of interior monologue but with no concrete analysis.

Since the expressive capacity of free indirect discourse to reveal states of mind is well recognized,²¹ it is clearly a feature of Oficio de tinieblas that deserves careful attention. We must examine the whole range of narrative modes used in this context, paying particular attention both to the different combinations used and to the question of which characters benefit most from the more expressive modes. (Quotations will all be set apart so that the original punctuation and layout remains evident.)

Various uses Castellanos makes of direct discourse deviate from the standard usage employed to record direct speech in conversation. We are not so much concerned here with her use of multiple direct discourse as an alternative to narrative summary, a device used in the case of the Tapachula landowners in Chapter 6 (p.59) and more extensively to put over the discussion amongst the menfolk of Ciudad Real in Chapter 27 (pp.275-78). Rather, we are concerned with the key question of character portrayal where we find direct discourse used in different forms of interior monologue:

Fascinadora de hombres . . . eso he de haberlo leído en alguna novela, pensó Isabel. Con razón las prohíbe Su Ilustrísima. (p.73)

The above example is meditative, with the thoughts introduced by "pensó" unmarked by introductory punctuation. The direct discourse of Pedro's interior monologue below is, on the other hand,

21. This is emphasized by Guillermo Verdín Díaz, Introducción al estilo indirecto libre en español (Madrid, 1970), p.170.

punctuated as speech, with an opening dash. This gives it the impact of a spoken outburst, thus emphasizing his indignation:

-¿Cómo está esto?, se decía. Yo dejo mi casa, mi familia, mi paraje; camino leguas, bajo montañas. Sufro el calor, me duele la enfermedad, no estoy de haragán, tirado todo el día en la hamaca, sino que rindo la jornada completa. Y cuando llega la hora de regresar resulta que regreso con las manos vacías. A mi modo de ver no está bien. No es justo. (p.53)

The meditative is combined with the effect of spoken outburst for Felipa in the following case, after some introductory narrative.

The meditative section, dependent on "pensó", takes the form of direct discourse while the outburst, no longer dependent on "pensó", is made possible by a transition to free direct discourse:

Pronto se resignó a perder a Marcela. No había previsto la posibilidad de una devolución. Debe de haber hecho un perjuicio, pensó. Con lo descuidada que es. Y ahora vienen a cobrarlo. Querrán cobrar también los días que la mantuvieron. Pero nosotros no tenemos con qué pagar. Miren, registren. Todo lo que yo gano ¡y es tan poco! se lo comen mis hijos. Ay, parecen sanguijuelas. Nada les basta, nada los deja contentos. Y lo que queda, cuando queda algo, lo despilfarra éste en su mayordomía. (p.36)

Sometimes the interior monologue presented as direct speech expresses the opinion of one's alter ego or conscience:

-Mírala, Pedro González Winiktón. La injusticia engendró delante de ti y tú lo consentiste. ¿Cómo se llama lo que has hecho? Pedro González Winiktón, eres juez. Júzgate. (p.48)

On the above occasion simple direct discourse is used. A similar dialogue with the conscience takes place in Catalina's experience but in her case the absence of any introductory punctuation or phrase denotes the words as free direct discourse:

¡Mentira! ¿No ves que te has mentido, durante años y años, Catalina? Si lo que dices hubiera sido verdad, si tú fueras madre de ese niño ¿recibirías el trato que recibes? (p.193)

The simple direct discourse tallies with Pedro's experience as a judge where the evidence is presented to him and he must pass

judgement while the free direct discourse is more apt for Catalina's meditations at the time.

The following example of direct discourse is an unusual one. We are alerted to this initially by the use of opening quotation marks instead of the usual dash:

"El lugar que las deidades de los antepasados escogieron para manifestarse está después de una distancia larga. Pero no importa. Camina tú adelante, venteador. En la vereda angosta te seguiremos . . . " (p.209)

In the following paragraphs these are stated to be Catalina's words, and also those of her followers: "Lo dice Catalina Puiljá, lo repiten quienes van tras ella" (p.209). What we are dealing with can really only be described as the voice of the folk. It melts into free discourse with the questions and answers involved in the spreading of the belief among the congregation:

Nadie extraño debe tocar ni una tabla. Las velas, el trago, también los hemos hecho nosotros. Y eso que envuelve al santo ¿qué es? Es un chal. Vino de lejos, de Guatemala; fue tejido allá también por manos de indios. Tiene, además, una virtud: ha sido propiedad de una mujer que tiene fuego en la cabeza. (p.210)

By expressing this as the voice of the Indian people as a whole, Castellanos has very effectively taken us right to the roots of the dissemination of the cult of Catalina's gods. The direct method, both direct discourse and free direct discourse, completely removes the filtering and informative voice of the omniscient author and brings us closer not only to the mind of a single character but also to the mind of the Indians as a group.

On an earlier occasion, as Catalina is still searching for the stone idols, free direct discourse again puts over the voice of the people: "Vedla . . . ". However, then we have "la voz" addressing Catalina and encouraging her, once more through free

direct discourse, alongside some narrative commentary:

Los que la escuchaban casualmente, al pasar junto a ella, se iban con un vago malestar. Tenía poderes, los dioses no habían desamparado a la ilol. La enormidad de sus revelaciones le roía las entrañas; vedla, con los labios sollamados, la mirada delirante, la cabellera revuelta. Vedla por el monte, caminar como una sonámbula. Es que está escuchando. La voz se multiplica en ecos: norte y sur, este y oeste. Aquí, aquí, no, más allá. Avanza, retrocede. Tropezas, la ropa se le rasga, los cardos la muerden. ¿Dónde vas caminando, Catalina Díaz Puiljá? ¿Encima de la tierra o adentro de tu alma? Llegaste, al fin. (p.195)

The "voz" could be Catalina's alter ego, as in our earlier example, in which case we are again dealing with interior monologue.

However, the mention of "los dioses" who have not forsaken her opens up the possibility that it is these gods who express the direct discourse to Catalina. (The commentary in the latter half, then, is presumably that of the gods amongst themselves.) Since we are dealing with Catalina at a moment of faith and inspiration, the voice of the gods and the voice of the alter ego, imagining these gods, comes to much the same thing. This passage, then, gives us an insight into Indian belief in the case of an individual whereas the passage cited previously gives us such an insight in the case of a group, the people.

A much more straightforward example of free direct discourse, again involving the Indians as a group successfully puts over their spontaneous faith that the message of the gods, expressed through Catalina as medium, is good news. Through this we realize the latent hope for redemption — both social and spiritual — that lies in the Indian soul:

Nadie de los que rodeaban a la ilol pudo comprender ni su evocación ni su profecía. Pero todos estaban contagiados de un júbilo salvaje que les pedía manos para convertirse en acción. ¡Por fin! ¡Por fin! Ha terminado ya el plazo del silencio, de la inercia, de la sumisión. ¡Vamos a renacer,

igual que nuestros dioses! ¡Vamos a movernos para sentirnos vivos! (p.212)

Turning now to the indirect modes, Castellanos does use simple indirect discourse as in the following example with Marcela:

"Se preguntaba cuál podía ser el motivo que indujo a la ilol a interponerse entre el castigo de su madre y ella y para qué la trajo a vivir consigo" (p.28). However, her preference is for free indirect discourse, which she uses even for very brief single sentences within the narrative in order to bring her closer to the subject and dramatize his thoughts:

Xaw sintió que le recorría la espalda un escalofrío de horror. ¿Era que alguien iba a responder a esta invocación? Y deseó desesperadamente estar lejos de allí, del sitio en el que iban a desencadenarse fuerzas bárbaras y sin nombre. (p.219)

Alternatively it is a more extensive meditative effect Castellanos seeks, as in the following example with Teresa, the nana:

No podía más. El trabajo la fatigaba hasta el aniquilamiento. ¿Y para qué trabajaba? Para tener un techo bajo del cual cobijarse, una tortilla con sal que comer. No valía la pena seguir viviendo. Porque ninguno la necesitaba realmente. La invalidez transitoria del "pasado" martoma Rosendo, producida siempre por el trago, era repugnante. Y Felipa, a pesar de sus achaques y de sus quejas era una mujer robusta y capaz. (p.253)

Although grammatically the example above could involve the author's omniscient narration, we can detect that it is, in fact, free indirect discourse because the sentiments are so clearly Teresa's. This is confirmed in this instance by the next sentence: "Teresa pensó en ambos con rencor" (p.253).

In the next excerpt, what initially seems like free indirect discourse actually turns out, with the mention of Catalina's name, to be simple indirect discourse:

La ilol espiaba a Marcela con los ojos desvariadores, dilatados. ¿Cómo era posible que esta muchacha insignificante

y estúpida que ella usaba como un simple instrumento de sus propósitos hubiera llegado a convertirse en la depositaria del tesoro que a Catalina se le negaba? (p.46)

In this instance we are dealing, therefore, with an authorial remark. However, it is a slanted one, which contains Catalina's sentiments. Also, it is worth noting that, in a novel where free indirect discourse is frequent, we are in a sense primed to take borderline cases as coming from the subject, not from the narrator. Thus the use of free indirect discourse interspersed with the author's usually slanted indirect interventions helps to play down the presence of the author.

The possibilities of free indirect discourse for exploring states of mind are appreciable. Castellanos uses it to put over Marcela's confusion out in the street after her rape (p.26); to examine Isabel's meditations about Julia (p.72); to explain Ulloa's attempt to size up Cifuentes (p.148); to dramatize Manuel's excitement at the prospect of opposing the Indians' idolatry (p.225); to bring to life Julia's nervousness as she waits for the arrival of her lover (p.198); to put over Pedro's desire to make the gods aware, through Catalina, of the urgent question of land redistribution. In addition, this form of discourse is used extensively in conjunction with other narrative modes to penetrate Catalina's emotions and reactions as sterile wife, as "mother" of Domingo, and as priestess for the gods she has brought to life. It is of interest to note that Castellanos does not only use free indirect discourse in the case of individuals; she also uses it, as she did free direct discourse, to give a vivid evocation of the outlook of the Indians as a group:

Los demás asintieron gravemente. Los viejos se retiraron de allí embargados por una cólera sin nombre y sin salida. ¿Qué había dicho este avenedizo, este Pedro? Que los trabajos que ellos habían padecido serían exención y desagravio para las generaciones venideras. ¿Acaso su condición era, pues, circunstancia azarosa y remediable? No, era destino, mandato de las potencias oscuras, voluntad de dioses crueles. ¡Qué burla a sus creencias, qué mofa a su vida, a sus virtudes humildes, a la sumisión que ahora despojaban de sus méritos si Pedro hubiera dicho la verdad! (p.63)

Perhaps most effective of all is a blend of various of the narrative modes we have discussed, not only for variety but using different modes for different functions. A brief effective example concerning Isabel goes from free direct discourse to free indirect discourse. The more immediate direct mode conveys her immediate reaction, the indirect mode a slightly more meditated justification. The fact that they are both free modes means that they follow on from the neutral opening narrative without a break:

Isabel se dejaba ablandar. Después de todo ¿qué más da que sirva ésta o la otra? Por lo menos a Teresa ya le conocía las mañas. Y por otra parte era segura, servicial. (p.257)

We witness another effective juxtaposition in the case of Julia:

Pero cuando Idolina transmitió a Julia el relato de Teresa, Julia no se admiró. Se le dilataron los ojos de asombro.

-Así que han vuelto a las andadas.

¿Lo sabía Fernando? ¿Por qué no la puso al tanto?
¿Quería encubrir a los chamulas? ¿O traicionarla a ella?
(pp.259-60)

After the author's opening omniscient comment here, the direct speech followed by free direct discourse distinguishes Julia's simple spoken reaction from the numerous questions that spring to mind in her unspoken thoughts.

The most impressive integration of different narrative modes, mostly for the purpose of interiorizing by means of internal monologue is, however, found in the case of Catalina. Chapter 16

contains numerous examples.

Catalina's questioning of the situation when listening to Pedro discussing plans with the other younger Indians in front of Domingo comes out in free direct discourse which breaks into the narrative. The mention of Domingo within this free direct discourse provokes a shift into simple direct discourse for her anguished outburst to the patron saint:

Catalina los sigue desde lejos, ansiosa, rechazada. ¿Qué dicen ahora? Palabras de hombres, juramentos. ¿Por qué Winiktón no aparta de estos vientos fuertes a Domingo? Domingo, Domingo. Pronunciar este nombre es masticar una raíz amarga.

-Lo arrancaron de mi regazo como si ya hubiera crecido y madurado. Me dejaron sola otra vez. Bruja, mala, ilol. Castigan el daño que hice, el que quiero hacer. ¡San Juan fiador, ten compasión de mí! (p.191)

Immediately following this we have a return to free direct discourse, a passage of stream of consciousness which begins with Catalina's describing her strange sensation of cold as she tends the steaming cooking pots. She links this in her mind to the damp cold of a cave and from this her interior monologue turns to caves in general and then, more specifically, to the memory of a cave with three idol-like stones which she found as a child along with her brother Lorenzo, who has now gone mad. She contrasts her fear of the unknown on that occasion to her lack of fear of living with Pedro, so apart from her and likewise unknown, and finally she turns to self pity in considering all she has lost.

After a paragraph of omniscient narration, Catalina's desire to return to the happy days of her youth bursts out in a free mode:

Retroceder, borrar este día de marido ausente, de hijo raptado. ¡Si se pudiera regresar hasta el principio! Cuando el trabajo era alegre como un juego y los juegos . . . (p.192)

The mention of the games gives rise to a brief description of them where the lack of finite verbs provides the necessary transition to an omniscient narration in the past tense of the first time she went to the cave as a child:

Correr por los montes, trepar entre las peñas y de pronto el pasmo de aquel encuentro. La cueva oculta entre la maleza. Rodó Catalina lastimándose con los guijarros, con los espinos. Miró la breve abertura sin atreverse a entrar. Se retiró de allí asustada. Pero volvería. Volvió con Lorenzo. (p.192)

Some sentences later the narrative slips into the present tense in order to give greater immediacy to the discovery in the cave. The transition is unobtrusively provided by a verbless sentence and a general comment in the present tense on the bats:

Aletearon los murciélagos. Buena seña encontrarlos aquí. El murciélago es un espíritu favorable, un nahual. Pero hay otra cosa que no es esta alarma, estas carreras de los pequeños animales sorprendidos. (p.193)

The narration then continues in the more vivid historic present. Within this, the moment of discovery is further dramatized by the insertion of direct speech, after which we return to omniscient narration for the years this discovery has remained a secret:

Afuera, y a distancia grande del lugar de peligro, se comunican sus impresiones. -¿Qué viste tú? -La cara de un brujo, de un demonio. ¿Y tú? No lo podría decir. Lorenzo tartamudea, es lento para expresarse. Y más cuando se azora. (p.193)

As the narration returns to the present day and Domingo in the subsequent paragraph it becomes slanted towards Catalina's viewpoint, almost free indirect discourse were it not for the mention of her name:

No fue Marcela quien lo llevó en sus entrañas. Envidias de brujos hicieron que la apariencia de las cosas engañase a todos. La madre fue Catalina. (p.193)

Following on this narrative viewpoint which is so close to Catalina's own we find the response of her alter ego, examined earlier (p.258), breaking out in free direct discourse to assert that the above is a lie. More free indirect discourse breaks into the narration subsequently with Catalina's realization that it is imperative for her to find the cave again and the chapter finally comes to its closing climax with the free direct discourse of the passage also discussed earlier (p.260) where Catalina, at least in her own mind, is addressed by the gods.

It would be fair to say that, while most of the characters of any importance in Oficio de tinieblas benefit to some extent from the interiorization offered by the expression of their thoughts through direct discourse, free direct discourse, and free indirect discourse, the character who receives this treatment most is Catalina. This is one of the major points which sets her apart in the novel as a character of true depth and, what is more, a convincing Indian character. In the context of the indigenista novel this is particularly significant since convincing Indian characters are, in the words of Joseph Sommers, "a rarity in the Latin American novel". Catalina, he holds, is "a genuine literary character, developed fully and subtly, with the complexity of a distinct personality, possessed of a particular set of personal traits".²² Although Sommers does not specifically say so, the full and subtle development of Catalina's character and the revelation of her particular traits is very much a contribution of the interiorizing narrative modes.

22. "The Indian-oriented Novel", p.262.

At the other end of the scale we have Leonardo Cifuentes, who is the only figure of importance into whose being we do not receive insight by means of interior monologue, however short. Since Castellanos offers insight into such a variety of other characters, both male and female, Indian and ladino, this omission is noteworthy, especially since, from what we know of Cifuentes through external details, he offers a seemingly ideal opportunity for insight into the mentality of the upstart.

Leonardo Cifuentes is no type-cast old-style oppressor. Taken into the Cifuentes household as an orphan, he was the adopted brother of the man who was later to become Isabel's first husband: Isidoro. After Isidoro's death, in which Leonardo may have been implicated, he married Isabel. By the end of the novel, through his leadership against Indian unrest, he has risen further, to be nominated as diputado federal.

Such details, one would have thought, offer great possibilities for interiorization. Yet Castellanos consistently avoids this. She commonly uses an omniscient authorial stance to comment on Leonardo, even when using the questions and exclamations so typical of the free modes:

¿Quién sabe qué sangre corría por las venas del huérfano! Acaso sangre más noble, más soberbia que la de sus benefactores. ¿Y qué le habían dado, aparte del apellido? La rústica educación de un vaquero. Mientras que al otro, a Isidoro, le dieron una carrera liberal. (p.75)

We learn of Leonardo's past through an outburst from Isabel, revealing her state of mind rather than his:

-Sí, distinto, porque Isidoro, mi marido, óyelo bien, mi marido, no lo que tú fuiste después para mí, era más que tu amigo, era tu hermano. ¿Quién, sino él, te recogió y obligó a sus padres a que te dieran asilo en su casa, porque tú no eras más que un huérfano y las monjas te maltrataban y te dejaban sin comer . . . ? (pp.69-70)

The nearest we get to Cifuentes himself, however, is direct speech:

-Deberías sentirte orgullosa, Isabel. Por ti no me dolió pasar encima de los deberes que me imponía la gratitud, la amistad, hasta la misma decencia. Enamoré a la esposa de Isidoro Cifuentes mientras Isidoro Cifuentes vivía. Y me casé con su viuda antes de que ajustara el plazo de su luto. (p.70)

As for the motivation behind his actions, we are given suggestions by Isabel:

-¡No lo sabes! Pero yo sí lo sé. Te tentó la codicia. Isidoro era rico. (p.70)

This heated exclamation is rejected by Leonardo and later she meditates on another possibility, expressed in free direct discourse:

Buscó entonces en el pasado para encontrar otra raíz a la acción de Leonardo. Topó con la envidia. ¿No es natural que separe a dos que se han criado juntos si uno de ellos es el que goza de todos los privilegios mientras que el otro ocupa siempre el segundo lugar? El mismo Caín de las Escrituras procedió así contra su hermano Abel por la desigualdad del trato que se les daba. (p.75)

It cannot pass unnoticed that, although it is Leonardo we are dealing with, we learn no more than external details while the revelation of the inner self on this occasion, through outbursts and ponderings, is given to Isabel. Similarly, we are offered insight into Idolina, Julia, and Ulloa when they, like Isabel, are affected by direct contact with Leonardo. Cifuentes himself, however, does not receive any such treatment.

Since Rosario Castellanos clearly has the capacity to present any given character partly through some process of interiorization and since Leonardo Cifuentes would seem from his past history, to be a potentially fascinating subject, we must conclude that her avoidance of this approach in his case is deliberate and that the function of the omission is to create an intentional

effect. Objectively we might make a certain comparison between Cifuentes and Catalina. Both are partial outcasts in society — he an adopted orphan; she a barren wife — and both seek power and gratification through whatever means they have at their disposal. This includes the manipulation of other individuals (Isabel and Julia; Marcela and Domingo) and the exertion of influence over a whole populace. Such an objective appraisal, however, is not what we are offered. Instead, our sympathies are directed towards Catalina through the insight we gain into her thoughts and actions. We are thus drawn to feel for her, and through her for all the Indians. The external nature of Leonardo's presentation, on the other hand, leaves us coldly critical of both what he does and how he achieves it.

Castellanos's use of interiorization thus emerges not only as a means of convincing character presentation. Through where she concentrates this approach and where she purposely omits it, we are given also a subtle kind of commentary to ensure our sympathies with the Indian side of the conflict.

There is a further function of the interiorization beyond character creation in Catalina's case. It is no coincidence that Chapter 16, which we analysed as an extensive example of the revelation of Catalina's inner being, is also the chapter which marks the first major articulation in the novel, the midpoint at which the first climax begins. Furthermore, when we look at the other major insights into Catalina's inner self, we find that they, too, tally with the beginning of climactic sections.

The second climax, centred on the rebirth of Catalina's original gods is brought about by her moulding new gods in

Chapter 22. Her initial urge to do something: "¿Por qué cruzar los brazos? . . . " (p.247) has already been mentioned as free discourse with the infinitive. Her actual moulding of the new gods is expressed by further free discourse with the infinitive, followed by omniscient narration:

¿Cómo tener presente otra vez la imagen esfumada de los idolos? Cada hora, cada día pasaban, cumpliendo su tarea de tachar un rasgo de aquellas facciones, de trastocar una expresión, de confundir un atributo. Y Catalina, ausiando detener esa corriente, hundió las manos en el barro y allí la punta de sus dedos fue imprimiendo lo que le dictaba una memoria imprecisa, contradictoria, infiel. (p.248)

Interiorization in the case of Catalina in this chapter, the beginning of the second climax, is not extensive for, though her actions are of key importance, we are in essence dealing with a reassertion of the situation as it stood at the beginning of the first climax (this time, however, involving the land question and the possibility of bloodshed). Perhaps for this reason, the chapter is only four pages long, half the length of Chapter 16.

Catalina's initial involvement in the third and final climax, which begins with her offering Domingo for crucifixion, in contrast, spans two chapters: a total of fourteen pages. These incorporate the use of both the free styles of discourse and also a narrative voice which is very close to Catalina. In Chapter 32 we share her questioning of the Indians' worship of the image of Christ instead of her gods, we share her assertion that she never gave her people reason to forsake her, and we are presented with her sudden realization that she does have something left to give: Domingo. His crucifixion is then covered in Chapter 33.

We share first Catalina's confused thoughts on Domingo, expressed in free indirect discourse:

Catalina lo mira con dureza, fijamente. ¿Quién es este extraño que ella ha entregado como complemento natural a la Cruz? El bastardo de un caxlán de Jobel; la deshonra de una muchacha de su raza; la vergüenza oculta de Lorenzo; el reproche de su marido, su propia llaga. (p.319)

Later we participate in her anguish, in the more immediate free direct discourse, that his sacrifice is not provoking sufficient suffering to be valid:

Catalina lo observa, angustiada. ¿Se ha rendido tan pronto y tan sin resistencia? Su martirio no saciará el hambre de los dioses. ¡Su muerte no va a bastar para redimir a la tribu!

¿Qué hacen los mayordomos? ¿Se distraen de sus deberes rituales, en reverencias mutuas, que no tienen fin? ¿Y las madrinas? ¿Pretenden nublar el espectáculo con el humo de los incensarios? (p.322)

Once Domingo is dead the people turn to Catalina for words of wisdom and she, now restored to her role as medium or priestess, speaks the words which form the key to the Indians' courage to rise up against the ladino:

Ahora nosotros también tenemos un Cristo. No ha nacido en vano ni ha agonizado ni ha muerto en vano. Su nacimiento, su agonía y su muerte sirven para nivelar al tzotzil, al chamula, al indio, con el ladino. Por eso, si el ladino nos amenaza tenemos que hacerle frente y no huir. Si nos persigue hay que darle la cara. (p.324)

The assimilation by the congregation of Catalina's assertion is revealed by the final words of the chapter: free direct discourse expressing once again the voice of the people:

No tiembles tú, mujer, por tu marido ni por tu hijo. Va al sitio donde se miden los hombres. Y ha de volver arras-trando por los cabellos a la victoria. Intacto, aunque haya recibido muchas heridas. Resucitado, después del término necesario. Porque está dicho que ninguno de nosotros morirá. (p.325)

In conclusion, the concentration on Catalina, incorporating interior monologue, emerges precisely when she is on the point or in the midst of acting in a way which provokes the progress of

the plot as regards the Indian-ladino conflict. Interiorization in the case of Catalina, therefore, has a functional role in the novel's structure: to ensure the reader's close attention and identification with the Indian side at the beginning of each climactic section.

Furthermore, the inner focus on Catalina and her outlook is implicitly linked with the Indians' self-assertion. Just as in Arguedas's Los ríos profundos where an insight into the Indian world-view through Ernesto prepares us for the transition to the magico-religious belief and uprising of the colonos at the end of that novel, here the individual focus on Catalina and her self-assertion gives way, in each case, to an increasingly active assertion of the Indian as a group, culminating with their rebellion.

In contrast, we note that in Chapter 36, once the rebellion is under way, Catalina is given no interior analysis whatsoever. While at the level of simple character presentation this vividly evokes her collapse — for by this stage she is a broken woman — structurally, just as her previous surges prepared us for the Indians's self-assertion, so this collapse prefigures the eventual collapse of the Indian rebellion and the triumph of the ladino leader, Leonardo Cifuentes.

In addition to interiorization, there are other facets of Castellanos's creation of convincing Indian characters that must be considered. An important aspect is the balance between Indian characteristics and universal ones. As we have noted on other occasions, a certain universality is essential in the presentation

of Indian characters for this is what enables the average Western reader to identify with them and believe in them. This, of course, is true of all characters, Indian and otherwise. However, in the case of the presentation of Indian characters this must not eclipse their intrinsically Indian facets, for these characters must be recognizably Indian too. External Indian features of dress and custom alone are not a satisfactory means of asserting the Indian element. Rather, it is an insight into the Indian world-view which will successfully put over as Indian both the individual and the group.

Catalina's problem, as Josph Sompers points out, is a universal one: she is barren.²³ Her response is in essence universal too: she seeks fulfilment by some other means, through an adopted son to whom she gives her name and through her career (as ilol). The details of her response, however, especially the latter response, are determined by her own culture and individual experience, just as, say, Idolina's response to her physical state is conditioned by her environment. Catalina rediscovers stone idols she had seen as a child and reasserts their power, indeed, recreating the idols when they are destroyed. A frustrated mother, she becomes instead "mother" of the gods and to the tribe, dreaming of union with her people by this means: "Otra vez, entre su pueblo y ella, no había desgarradura. Catalina lo volvía a tomar de la mano, como a un niño, para conducirlo" (p.250). In fact, Catalina's response to her problem has even been seen by one critic as a

23. After the Storm: Landmarks of the Modern Mexican Novel (Albuquerque, 1968), p.169.

local metaphor for a universal striving after full humanity and meaningful participation in life.²⁴ In this we might even see Catalina -- like Juana in Balún-canán -- as a symbol for the Indian in general.

Catalina's need for attention and even adulation is a universal one, as is her desire for power, shared in the novel by Xaw, Manuel, and, most of all, Cifuentes. Yet, unlike the power-hungry Cifuentes, Catalina also has the need, like Teresa the nana, to give. Catalina's gift -- Domingo for crucifixion -- may only be understandable within her own cultural context; the need to give itself, despite sacrifice on her part (for she is upset to lose Domingo), is universally comprehensible.

The need to give and the contrasting urge for power reveal to us that there is both good and bad in Catalina's complex make-up. We see this on lesser occasions too: for example, in her initial instinctive defence of Marcela against her mother's scolding and her later more meditated and rationalized manipulation of Marcela in marriage. Again we are dealing with universally understandable facets of her character.

Marta Portal also recognizes Catalina's solitude as a universal influence which she shares with Idolina: "El móvil esencial de las conductas de una y otra mujeres es la soledad; la soledad que hace presentir la presencia de potencias sobrenaturales".²⁵

24. Martha O. Lousaunau, "Mexico's Contemporary Women Novelists" (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, 1973), p.51. Lousaunau also refers to Sylvia J. Brann, "El teatro y las novelas de Luisa Josefina Hernández" (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Illinois, 1969), p.267.

25. "Narrativa indigenista mexicana", 206-07.

Catalina's individuality is ensured by a certain atypicality. She is barren and, even at the beginning of the novel, is revered as having supernatural powers. We see "evidence" of this in her capacity to divine what has happened to Marcela in Ciudad Real. Catalina is also distinguished by rebelling internally against the idea of separation from Pedro, as would be common in her culture in the case of a barren marriage: "¡No se separaría nunca, ella no se quedaría sola, no sería humillada ante la gente!" (p.13). Her difference and her supernatural powers are developed from the beginning onwards, both by what she does and by the author's treatment of her through interiorization, thus clearly individualizing her.

Pedro, too, stands out from the crowd through his actions and, to a lesser extent than Catalina, also through interiorization. He is a judge and respected by his fellow Indians; he makes a successful attempt to learn Spanish; he can command the obedience not only of his fellow Indians but also of Padre Manuel (Chapter 10); he collaborates with a ladino, Ulloa, in a bid to bring about land redistribution. Like Catalina, Pedro is rebelling against the traditional, fatalistic Indian submissiveness, though this is expressed in a different way from her.

Along with these atypical features, Pedro is still clearly Indian. While in Catalina's case her indigenous identity comes over largely through magico-religious cultural manifestations, in Pedro's case it is partly political and socio-economic considerations which reveal his Indian identity: his position as a judge and his awareness of the injustice the Indians, himself included, suffer. He is not, however, denied the magico-religious outlook

we see so prominently in Catalina, for he has a certain suspicious respect for her (p.213) and even a belief in the power of her gods:

Ay, si pudiera dejar caer sobre su oreja una palabra, una sola palabra, mientras dormía. ¡Y si esa palabra llegase a ser depositada en el altar, para que la recogieran los ídolos!

Pedro se inclinó sobre el sueño de su mujer y, lentamente, fue pronunciando la única oración que sabía:

-La tierra, Catalina. Diles que nos devuelvan la tierra. Si nos piden la sangre, si nos piden la vida se las daremos. Pero que nos devuelvan la tierra. (p.249)

In fact, Pedro's stance is midway between non-religious practicality and faith. We hear in Chapter 18 that he, "lo mismo que sus compañeros de raza o condición, creía en la verdad de lo que se estaba manifestando": the promise of the gods, "que tú y tú y tú, serás libre, que serás dichoso" (p.214). But Pedro sees also that their collaboration with Ulloa holds out hopes beyond this. Nonetheless, land restitution through him is still seen by Pedro in relation to the people's faith: "Y ésta será la primera palabra del dios que se haya cumplido" (p.215).

While Catalina's essential motivating force, giving so many varied results, is her condition as frustrated mother, Pedro's is a desire for justice, a motivation, like Catalina's, understandable in universal terms. Pedro is not, however, type-cast by this fairly simple central characteristic for we find other universal emotions breaking out in him too: jealousy, anger, and loneliness:

Le habían arrebatado, lo comprendía bien, una posesión, un dominio suyo: Catalina. Y para recuperarlo no tenía al alcance más que la violencia. Golpear a su esposa hasta que el dolor (¡ah, ese rictus tan compañero de esa cara!) borrara el gesto extraño de distracción y ausencia. Sí, castigarla por su abandono, por su traición. Pedro se sentía desnudo y más, desollado, ahora que el amor, que la necesidad de Catalina por él se había eclipsado. (p.213)

Nor is he the infallible leader. In Chapter 31 he is uncertain of what Ulloa has said exactly and mistranslates Ulloa's call for no pretext to be given to the ladino to deprive the Indians of justice as a call for the use of force (p.304). These human weaknesses, in contrast to Pedro's noble desire for justice and his capacity as a leader, add to his credibility as a character.

As we have seen, Castellanos's treatment of her two major Indian characters is very much one of inner analysis rather than external description. As she herself said, she attempted to "entender los móviles y captar la psicología de los personajes" in this novel. On the same occasion, particularly as regards Indian character creation, Castellanos asserted that she sees creative writing as a process of discovery:

Escribir ha sido, más que nada, explicarme a mí misma las cosas que no entiendo. Cosas que, a primera vista, son confusas o difícilmente comprensibles. Como los personajes indígenas eran, de acuerdo con los datos históricos, enigmáticos, traté de conocerlos en profundidad. Me pregunté por qué actuaban de esa manera, qué circunstancias los condujeron a ser de ese modo. Así, comencé a desentrañarlos y a elaborarlos.²⁶

In fact, there are very few strictly external details about Catalina and Pedro. We are not really conscious of what they look like but, rather, of how they think and act. The reference to dress, for example, which we find at the beginning of Chapter 4 as they prepare to visit Rosendo and Felipa, is the exception rather than the rule. In this chapter, Indian custom is clearly subjugated to the question of characterization: Rosendo is offended that another should presume to take on the father's role of finding

26. Carballo, "Rosario Castellanos", p.5.

a husband for his daughter, Pedro is ashamed at Felipa's immediate question about payment, and the typical procedure is set against Felipa's avarice:

Felipa se arrepintió de la pregunta por la que había asomado la oreja su avidez. Mecánicamente se acogía ya a las fórmulas consagradas por la costumbre.

-Es una muchacha muy haragana esta mi hija. Ustedes todavía no la han tanteado bien. (p.39)

In the case of Domingo's birth, the deviation from the standard procedure, while leaving the usual process evident, serves primarily to establish Catalina's assertive adoption of the role of Domingo's parent: "¿Pero qué puede entender un inocente de todas estas cosas? Catalina lo retiró de allí. Nadie más que ella se haría cargo de recibir al recién nacido" (p.49).

When we come to the less major Indian characters, Castellanos's approach is still a psychological one. She leaves the burden of their Indian identity to the cultural and socio-economic context they are identified with and concentrates on their inner reactions in chosen situations, sometimes in conflict with an alien environment. Thus, while we do not get to know them in all their complexity, we still have the impression of knowing them from the inside.

Marcela, for example, is shown ill at ease in the environment of Ciudad Real: "Turbada por el gentío; aturdida por el lenguaje extraño" (p.17). Her Indian identity is emphasized when she finds confidence in the fact that Doña Mercedes speaks to her in Tzotzil. The main impression we have of Marcela from her experience in Ciudad Real is of her confusion: "Porque Marcela no guardaba sino una imagen confusa de la violencia que había sufrido" (p.24). Emphasis on her state of mind is conveyed by

free indirect discourse: "Miró a su alrededor con extrañeza. ¿Quién la condujo hasta aquí? ¿Cuánto tiempo había permanecido en este sitio? ¿Por qué? No alcanzaba a comprender, no recordaba" (p.26). Her understandable confusion lasts until her experience is quantified by Catalina's words: "Repitió mentalmente la frase, saboreándola: 'un caxlán abusó de ella'. Esto era lo que había sucedido. Algo que podía decirse, que los demás podían escuchar y entender. No el vértigo, no la locura. Suspiró aliviada" (p.29).

On another occasion we appreciate Marcela's revulsion at the thought of the ladino-fathered child in her womb: "Empezó a sentirlo: eso se movía, golpeaban, asfixiaba. Un espasmo de asco, último gesto de defensa, la curvó. Un ansia incontrolable de arrojar la masa gelatinosa que pacientemente roía sus entrañas para alimentarse; un deseo de destruir esa criatura informe que la aplastaba ya con el pie del amo" (p.46). These are isolated occasions, not part of a full characterization, but nonetheless we are left with a vivid psychological impression of universal sentiments in an Indian setting.

The case of Xaw is similar. We witness him feeling uncomfortable when forced to share Padre Manuel's breakfast table and later we feel for his jealousy, expressed in free indirect discourse, when, having accepted having his power usurped by Manuel, he now finds competition in Catalina and her throng: "La compasión dejaba su sitio a la cólera en el alma de Xaw. Habían usurpado a su puesto. ¿Y quiénes? Una turba de avenedizos que ignoraban el ritual y la doctrina. Unos impostores sin escrúpulos" (p.221).

Xaw is assertive and jealous, sentiments we can all sympathize

with. Like Catalina, he wants the respect and reverence of his people. Xaw is also scared, again a universal emotion: on the occasion above he falls back on Manuel; when Manuel is murdered he runs all the way to Ciudad Real to tell the Bishop.

As regards Xaw's Indian outlook, we appreciate his half-way position in that while he feels a shudder run down his spine upon witnessing Catalina at the cave (p.219) and betrays this idolatry to Don Manuel, he has not exactly maintained the manifestations of the Catholic faith in San Juan Chamula and shares the other Indians' fearful respect of Catalina: "Está señalada. Nunca ha tenido hijos" (p.224).

It is the human and psychological penetration of the Indian figures, both major and minor, that makes them successful as characters without denying their Indian outlook. This is where Castellanos wins over the more anthropologically oriented authors like Pozas.

The nana, like Xaw, also lies midway between the Indian and the ladino. She is by birth an Indian but her present environment -- the Cifuentes household -- links her to the ladino. Her presentation, too, is partly akin to that of many of the ladino characters: unlike the majority of the Indian characters, with Teresa we hear her background history, which explains her devotion to Idolina as a substitute child. On the other hand, Teresa's telling of legend-like stories to Idolina points to her essential Indian world-view.

Like Xaw and Marcela, the nana dramatizes a psychological reaction in a certain situation: in her case, rootlessness. We see her vacillate between the two cultures. She retains only a

little of her indigenous outlook, evident in the stories she tells to Idolina (which we shall examine in the following section on indigenous world-view). She is not, however, fully assimilated into ladino life and is unlikely to become so because of her status of servant.

She leaves the Cifuentes household because of a personal motive: her capacity to love and give is no longer needed. Yet among the Indians she feels a void in her without Idolina and is homesick for familiar ladino objects to the extent of repeating their Spanish names over to herself. Her familiarity with ladino life is betrayed by an unguarded exclamation in Spanish and she feels no relation to the Indian worship at the cave. Back once more in the Cifuentes household, her predicament is the same in reverse: "Teresa permaneció largo rato, con los ojos abiertos en la oscuridad, haciéndose la misma pregunta que en la cueva: ¿qué tengo yo que hacer aquí?" (p.258). She has largely lost her cultural roots and without the love needed by Idolina that bound her to a life among ladinos she belongs nowhere.

Teresa's sensation of rootlessness is understandable in universal terms and we feel for it through the psychological focus on her as a single individual. However, in national terms she puts over the predicament of so many of Mexico's Indians, sufficiently acculturated to have lost much of their original Indian identity but not adequately assimilated into the mainstream of Mexican culture to have forged an identity there. We have, therefore, in the portrayal of the individual predicament of the nana not only a vivid depiction of a particular psychological problem but also a clear indictment of the acculturation process Mexico has hoped to achieve for her Indian population.

Indigenous World-view

Castellanos puts over the need for an appreciation of the Indian world-view through the attitude of Fernando Ulloa, described by Marta Portal as representing "el tipo del mestizo indigenista".²⁷ He is the old-style indigenista, convinced that political and to a certain extent socio-economic reform — land redistribution — will solve all. While this is of paramount importance, as Pedro recognizes, it needs to be accompanied by a cultural insight which Ulloa simply does not have. He cannot, for example, appreciate that the Indians must carry out their Holy Week celebrations (Chapter 30) in order to ensure rainfall for sowing time and sees only the danger of their being gathered together, easy prey for the ladinos of Ciudad Real. Ulloa has high ideals as we see when he rates César for his prejudice: "No diga los indios como si se tratara de los habitantes de otro planeta; procure entender sus actitudes; piénsese cómo se comportaría usted si lo colocaran en una situación semejante a la de ellos" (p.184). It is César, however, who realizes that some effort must be made to put matters in the context of the Tzotzil world-image. For this reason he does not hide from the Indians the fact that the "enemy" Virgen de la Caridad has not been taken on procession through the streets, a detail which he knows will give them confidence. Furthermore, it was César who handed over Julia's shawl to Catalina for the gods, supposedly as a gift from one woman with supernatural powers to another:

César pensó que sería conveniente, para el prestigio de Ulloa en la zona tzotzil, mostrar su apoyo a estas creencias.

27. "Narrative indigenista mexicana", 204.

Se lo insinuó con bastante claridad. Pero Fernando no accedió nunca a sancionar con su presencia o con sus palabras un rito que no calificaba más que como una superstición grosera.

Los indios no comprendían esta insensibilidad de quien les mostraba tanta simpatía en otros terrenos. No se atrevían a interrogar. Pero algo dentro de ellos se cerraba cuando este hombre, Ulloa, les pedía confianza o les hablaba de justicia y redención. (p.306)

The need for an appreciation of the Indians' magico-religious outlook is therefore made clear to us and Castellanos makes sure throughout the novel that we as readers are given some insight into such an outlook and that we feel a certain empathy with it.

Catalina is our main link with the Indian world-view. Although she is clearly seeking some substitute gratification and has a need for the respect of her people, her search for power is not coldly rational as it is with Leonardo Cifuentes. She seems to come to her priestess status by an irrational or subconscious and religious path. We witness Catalina apparently hearing the voice of the gods as she searches for the cave; we see her states of trance and frenzy as medium; we see her, an unwanted woman, hand over Domingo in an urge to give to her people. Although her actions are irrational, we sympathize with Catalina because of the revelation of her inner being that Castellanos gives us and thus, through Catalina, we come to feel for the magico-religious outlook of the Indian.

We are supported in our appreciation of this by the innate religious respect for Catalina of the sceptical Xaw and, even more so, by the shared belief of the ever-practical Pedro. The collective faith of the people is also successfully put over, aided by judicious use of different modes of discourse. We can, therefore, perceive why the Indians murder Manuel when he threatens their

priestess, their gods, and implicitly the hopes for the future which these represent: something not offered by the Catholic faith.

Even in the case of the crucifixion of the unsuspecting ten-year-old, Domingo, we do not dismiss the event outright as barbarous cruelty for we know that he is looked on with a certain fear as "el que nació cuando el eclipse". We have also just seen the apparently significant spilling of all the holy water on him (p.312) and, therefore, can appreciate that he has been set apart. Furthermore, we have become acquainted with the syncretic nature of the Indians' religious outlook: Lent is "el vientre del año" (p.311); Holy Week is a time to conjure up rain for the crops; the idols in the cave and the saints in the church of San Juan Chamula are various gods who must be served. Christ is different: he is "el dios de los caxlanes" who guarantees the caxlanes' absolute power: "-Ellos lo clavaron en una cruz y lo mataron y bebieron su sangre. Desde entonces nadie los puede vencer" (p.309).

We are not dealing with standard Catholicism but with an indigenous cosmovisión which has incorporated elements of the Catholic faith and interpreted them according to the Indian world-image. From the Indian point of view it seems only reasonable to attribute the ladinos' position of control to their religious affiliations. The remedy to be taken is only one step further: an Indian Christ: "Somos iguales ahora que nuestro Cristo hace contrapeso a su Cristo" (p.325). The notion of eternal life is incorporated too, in the Indians' belief that they will not die in battle.

In her depiction of the Indians murdering a priest, crucifying

a child, and indulging in a bloodbath of senseless killing in their uprising, Castellanos is certainly not giving us an idealized picture of the Indians. They have vices; they can be brutal as their rebellion proves, though in the context of the oppression they have suffered this is no worse than ladino brutality has been. In this novel, however, unlike her cuento, "La tregua", Castellanos does not over-emphasize ladino brutality, an emphasis that only leads back to the novel of propagandistic social realism. She gives just one brief horrific detail early in the novel to put Indian violence into perspective: the rape of Pedro's sister as a child: "su hermana más pequeña, con el pie traspasado por el clavo con que un caxlán la sujetó al suelo para consumir su abuso" (p.30).

Rather than justify Indian brutality by previous ladino brutality, as she partly did in "La tregua", Castellanos concentrates here on the other aspect evident in "La tregua": she makes sense of Indian violence and brutality by providing us with an insight into the world-view which has brought about Manuel's murder, Domingo's crucifixion, and the power behind the uprising. By this means we perceive the Indians' behaviour as it is in their own eyes, viewed from the standpoint of their often magico-religious world-view.

There is, in addition, an aspect of Indian behaviour, even in violence, which distinguishes it from that of the individually self-seeking ladinos: this is their desire, pin-pointed by Joseph Sommers, to better the communal lot.²⁸ Even Catalina, who has her personal if often subconscious motives for what she does, offers

28. "The Indian-oriented Novel", 262.

Domingo not only to satisfy her own need to give but also as the key to making the Cross "el instrumento de salvación de todos" (p.317).

As well as the magico-religious world-view of the Indian and the kind of outlook which perceives a situation in communal rather than individual terms, Castellanos brings out another facet of the indigenous cosmovisión that differentiates their outlook from that of the ladinos. This is their different temporal outlook. While the ladinos move in a linear, historical time, set in the Cárdenas period, the Indians seem to hold to a cyclical or static, ahistorical concept of time.

It is cyclical because it is linked to the annual passing of the seasons: "la Cuaresma es el vientre del año. En sus horas -- largas, transparentes, inmóviles -- fermentan las estaciones que han de regir el destino de la tribu" (p.311). It is cyclical also in the element of eternal return: the initial and second establishment of the pagan gods and the recurrent conflict with the ladino that always ends in defeat for the Indian. A quotation from the penultimate chapter underlines the static ahistorical nature of the situation: "No existe ni antes ni hoy. Es siempre. Siempre la derrota y la persecución En esta eternidad se cumple el destino de la tribu" (pp.362-63).

We are prepared for this ahistorical concept of time from the very beginning of the novel, which opens with the myth of San Juan Fiador, aptly described by Joseph Sommers as being expressed in language like that of the Popol Vuh,²⁹ the Maya-Quiché version

29. "El ciclo de Chiapas: nueva corriente literaria", Cuadernos Americanos, Year XXIII, 133, no.2 (March-April 1964), 246-61 (p.258).

of the Creation. The language here helps us to appreciate that we are being introduced into a mythical world while the content of the legend reveals the unimportance of historical time. Although incorporating a vague reference to the men of the Conquest — "otros hombres" (p.9); "los recién venidos" (p.10) — prior to this the presence of San Juan Fiador stretches back unmeasured to the time of the Creation: "San Juan, el Fiador, el que estuvo presente cuando aparecieron por primera vez los mundos" (p.9). At the other end of the scale, the narration of this legend, a part of timeless Indian belief, melts into the present moment of the novel with Pedro and Catalina.

Likewise, the nana's mitificación of recent events which closes the novel is set in an ahistoric "otro tiempo" (p.366), vaguely defined as being in the fairly distant past: "no habías nacido tú, criatura; acaso tampoco había nacido yo" (p.366). Thus at beginning and end of the novel we see the temporal events of historical reality — the Conquest; the recent rebellion — absorbed into the ahistorical Indian mythical outlook. As Sommers concludes on the differing concepts of time: "Para los tzotziles la novela termina con la quiebra de su revuelta, momento menos comprensible para ellos como histórico, que como retorno a una obscuridad eterna".³⁰

The Indians' different outlook on reality clearly has implications for this novel's interpretation of their prospects for the future. In a more recent article, Sommers comments on

30. Joseph Sommers, "Rosario Castellanos: nuevo enfoque del indio mexicano", La Palabra y el Hombre, 29 (January-March 1964), 83-88 (p.84).

what he sees as a social pessimism inherent in the presentation of the Indian "como un sujeto incapaz de entender su pasado o de analizar su presente". The rigid stance of the ladino is also remarked upon. These Sommers sees as a limitation on the novel's capacity for socio-political critique.³¹ Clearly, the limitation is not simply on criticism of the ladino's actions as seen in the novel: there is criticism of the government acculturation programme to be found in Teresa's rootlessness; an indictment of indigenista politics can be deduced from Ulloa's blindness to indigenous cultural considerations; the ruthlessness of the oligarchy is made evident in the assassination of Ulloa while the corrupt personalismo of Mexican politics comes over in the figure of Leonardo Cifuentes. Nor does the Church escape criticism for its tacit approval of this ruthless maintenance of the status quo. As Sommers had pointed out on an earlier occasion, there is an implicit assertion in this novel that the ideals of the Mexican Revolution have never really reached Chiapas or, if they have, that they have been speedily betrayed.³² The limitation Sommers comments on must be, rather, on the possibility of constructive criticism of the kind that points to an alternative. His comment on the presentation of the Indian, in particular, reflects on the validity of the indigenous world-view as an outlook to be adhered to in the present day.

We find this problem in Arguedas's Los ríos profundos where

31. "Oficio de tinieblas", Nexos, no.2 (February 1978), 15-16 (p.16).

32. "Changing View of the Indian in Mexican Literature", Hispania, 47, no.1 (March 1964), 47-55 (p.53).

there is a tension in the colonos' uprising between their power to make demands and their failure to perceive the real enemy, both of which derive from their magico-religious outlook. In the case of Los ríos profundos, William Rowe comments: "Myth is both strength and weakness: its capacity to challenge social oppression is in turn lost when it becomes mystification".³³ Sommers notes a similar tension in Oficio de tinieblas:

Paradójicamente, la cultura tradicional tal y como aparece en la novela, constituye, por un lado una rigurosa fuerza de cohesión y de resistencia contra el aniquilamiento socioeconómico y, por el otro, un mecanismo a través del cual se canalizan los paliativos que permiten absorber y soportar la opresión de un sistema intolerable.³⁴

The negative and even reactionary side of the Indian cosmovisión can be seen in the Indian mythicizing tendency, exemplified in the nana's final tale. In this mitificación, which brings the novel to its close, she remoulds events to produce a tale where the defeat of the Indian rebellion is put over as just punishment for their sins. Here we witness the birth of the kind of myth whose function is, as anthropologists have recognized, to maintain the status quo. In more general terms, we are dealing with an attitude which enables the Indians to accept and absorb defeat as their just reward. For this reason, we find them in the timeless siempre of defeat in the penultimate chapter (p.362). This is the latter aspect in the above comment by Sommers.

Clearly, the mythicizing capacity may well turn out counter-

33. José María Arguedas, Los ríos profundos, edited by William Rowe (Oxford, 1973). The comment is taken from Rowe's introduction, p.xxxi.

34. "Oficio de tinieblas", 16.

productive. There is also, however, the chance that while it enables defeat to be absorbed, it need not necessarily identify this defeat as right nor acceptable. Rather, as Walter Langford suggests, a resilience may be built up.³⁵ This might incorporate, as Davis suggests (p.40), an adaptation to changing circumstances and possibly the glimpse of distant hope.

The dual socio-political implication of the indigenous cosmovisión is not, in fact, as paradoxical as Rowe or Sommers make it out to be. This is easily perceived if we are careful to make a distinction between what is specifically myth or the mythicizing tendency and what constitutes the more general area of shared cultural identity and belief, of which myth is only a limited part.

In the case of the nana, the capacity for mitificación is the only vestige she has of her Indian world-view and it offers only an unquestioning acceptance of defeat. As for cultural identity with her fellow Indians, she has lost any such affinity, as is all too evident on her visit to the cave: all she experiences as someone who feels herself to be "al margen de una corriente" is "disgusto" and "nostalgia de gentes blancas, de palabras españolas" (p.256).

Those who adhere to a shared cultural identity, on the other hand, have access to a source of strength. Nowhere do we see this more evidently than with Domingo's crucifixion. The Indians are united in belief and culture: in worship of Catalina's gods and

35. The Mexican Novel Comes of Age (Notre Dame & London, 1971), p.185.

in other religious manifestations. The possible irony that Domingo is not really a Christ who is truly Indian, since Cifuentes is his father, is immaterial. It is the shared belief, the cultural solidarity, that gives the Indians the strength and confidence to rise up. Furthermore, they are not blinded, as Arguedas's colonos were, to the real enemy. The phenomenon is aptly summed up by a sociolinguistic article from the Mexican magazine Proceso: "La cultura, en este caso, se transforma en una cultura de resistencia, de 'concientización', y el conflicto que en una etapa se plantea en términos culturales se transforma en lucha social".³⁶

The above occurs, of course, before the Indians' defeat. After their defeat we see the lack of this cultural solidarity and the effects of its absence:

Los sobrevivientes ignoran su número. Jamás se reúnen ni junto al rescoldo, ni en torno del alimento, ni alrededor de los ancianos que amonestan ni de los memoriosos que relatan. Se esconden unos de otros para no compartir la presa que los sustentará y el refugio que ha de cobijarlos.

Solos, estos hombres olvidan su linaje, la dignidad que ostentaban, su pasado. (p.362)

Because they are alone and ununited, these people lack any strength. What is more, without cultural identity there is no dignity. However, by the end of this short penultimate chapter we find that there is something to unite them and to give them hope. This is the arca.

Admittedly, the "palabra divina" that this chest contains turns out, ironically, to be the Ordenanzas militares Leonardo

36. Gilberto López y Rivas, "La castellanización de los indígenas, para acelerar el etnocidio", Proceso, 16 October 1978, p.38.

Cifuentes devised against Indian attack. However, this is no more ironic than the "Indian Christ", Domingo, being racially half-ladino: his crucifixion still united the people to fight. Likewise, Catalina's second gods were no less valid through being clay substitutes which she had moulded herself. Furthermore, the fact that this arca is kept and worshipped in a cave perhaps links it to these gods and suggests that a similar cult could arise, leading to similar unity and strength. As Reynaldo Jiménez commented on Los ríos profundos, "para el indio actual, la recuperación de su cultura, de sus tradiciones, es la etapa inicial para su afirmación en el presente".³⁷ Certainly, there is the germ of this "afirmación", despite the disaster of defeat, in the cult of the arca and its book: "Son testigos de que el libro existe. Que no se ha perdido en las vicisitudes de la fuga ni en el saqueo del desastre. Existe, para que la esperanza no desfallezca. Existe" (p.364).

Just as the mythcizing tendency of the last chapter has ambiguous implications, so the penultimate chapter, our last view of the tribe, is ambiguous. Against their lack of solidarity and their eternal defeat we find a unity and hope deriving from the arca yet, in turn, against this there is the irony of its contents. Nevertheless, although the possibility of a future self-assertion and victory is left in the balance, it would seem that the Indians will survive:

En esta eternidad se cumple el destino de la tribu. Porque es voluntad de los dioses que los tzotziles permanezcan.

37. "Realidad y mitificación: el narrador-niño en Los ríos profundos", Texto Crítico, 14 (July-September 1979), 104-16 (p.113)

En grutas y al aire libre, de noche y a pleno sol, hembras y varones se ayuntan para perpetuarse

El labrador, que guardaba la semilla en su puño cerrado, la deja caer en el lugar propicio. No espera a la cosecha. Otro ha de venir después que él y lo levantará. (p.363)

From this quotation, placing the Indian future in the overall context of natural continuity, we see that the Indians' view of reality -- a magico-religious, mythicizing, ahistorical outlook -- is not necessarily a limitation on their vision of their position in the world. It is simply a different vision from that of the non-Indian. What is more, it is a different vision that Castellanos opens our eyes to by means of her sympathetic presentation and even incorporates into the first and last chapters of the otherwise linear, historical perspective of her novel.

If we are to seek any final "message" regarding the future for the Indians we can perhaps find it in the symbolism of the novel's title. Joseph Sommers gloomy interpretation is too vague and unrelated to the title: he suggests that the title "enlaza irónicamente la resurrección de Cristo con la frustrada redención de los indios".³⁸ Langford's translation of the title as Occult Craft, which he relates to Catalina's role as magic healer (pp. 184-85) is suggestive but most likely mistaken. A few other critics remind us that the Office of Tenebrae is one of the Catholic ceremonies during Holy Week.³⁹ It is a gloomy, funereal ritual in which candles are extinguished to evoke the darkness the world felt at Christ's capture and crucifixion. One candle, however, is left alight. In the overall context of the novel we

38. "Oficio de tinieblas", 16.

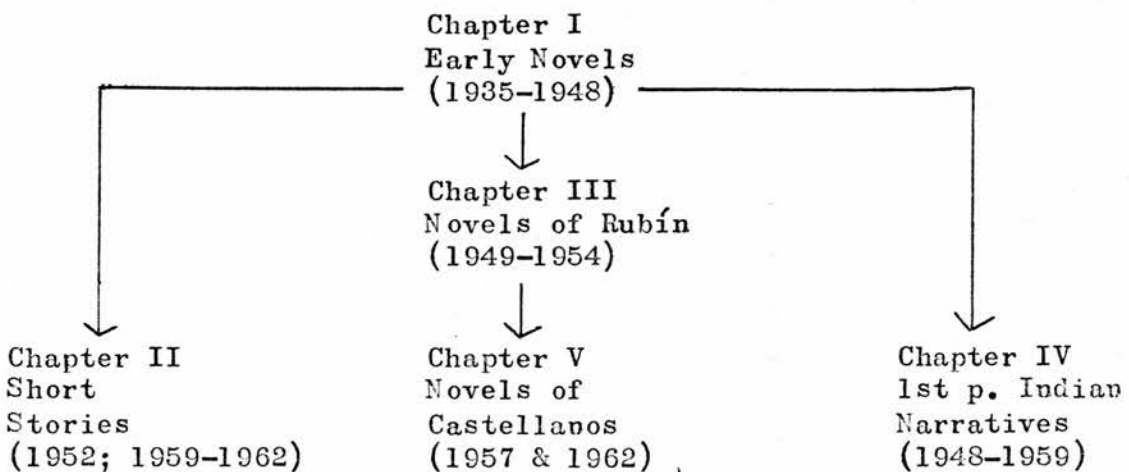
39. See Millán, p.292, Davis, pp.36-38, and Dybvig, p.54.

must clearly take this symbolically. The one candle that remains burning suggests a ray of hope that never dies, despite encroaching oppression and black despair. The Indians and their hopes are never completely obliterated but remain to flourish again when the time comes. It may be a long wait, as the last sentence of the novel evocatively intimates: "Faltaba mucho tiempo para que amaneciera" (p.368). However, no doubt the ahistorical temporal outlook of the indigenous peoples will enable them to bide their time.

In both of Castellanos's indigenista novels, then, we find a careful structure incorporating an insight into the indigenous world-view. Oficio de tinieblas goes further than Balún-cacán in the latter aspect, aided by its interior analysis of Indian character, especially in the person of Catalina. Neither novel offers us a cut and dried "message" but both incorporate suggestive implications relating to the future of the Indian population. A true novelist, Castellanos offers her readers the ambiguities and leaves them to reach their own conclusions. Her novels do not spring from a desire to make ideological affirmations nor, indeed, to fulfil an informative function relating to Indian life. Rather, Castellanos starts from a desire to create literature.

CONCLUSION

When we come to look back on the evolution of indigenista fiction in Mexico, what we perceive is not so much a simple, linear development but, rather, a three-pronged process. After the early novels, there seem to be three major lines of development in the literary approach to the Indian, all culminating at approximately the same time, around 1960. The mainstream development of the indigenista novel runs from the early novels through those of Ramón Rubín to come to a climax with the achievements of Rosario Castellanos in her two novels: Balún-canán (1957) and Oficio de tinieblas (1962). Alternative lines of development are seen in the cuento and in first-person Indian narratives, the latter coming to full fruition with Castro's Los hombres verdaderos (1959) while the largely contemporaneous short stories of Zepeda (1959), Dolujanoff (1959), Castellanos (1960), and Lombardo de Caso's longer La culebra tapó el río (1962) all bring valuable advances. A diagram serves to illustrate our treatment of this triple evolution:



Within the mainstream line of development — that of the indigenista novel proper — there is a chronological linear progression. The pitfalls of the early novels — lack of unity, too folkloric an emphasis, and an overt ideology, often put over by means of flat characters and involving idealization of the Indian — are completely eliminated in the novels of Castellanos. With her novels we see fully developed the occasional potential of the early novels for a diminishing of the folkloric approach, an increased universality, a greater psychological emphasis, an insight into the indigenous world-view, and an integrated structure. Rubín's novels mark a half-way stage. Their balanced structure and unity and their functional incorporation of indigenous custom for symbolic purposes or with a psychological emphasis mark a clear advance on the early novels. The psychological emphasis in itself is an important contribution of Rubín's novels though it is limited in his case by being presented through authorial intervention. Castellanos offers a further advance in her use of interiorizing modes of discourse. These tend to eliminate the authorial presence, giving us a more direct insight into the characters' thoughts and world-view, external aspects of custom being omitted. Again, we find that while Rubín's message is put over in no uncertain terms Castellanos has progressed to a more subtle and often ambiguous implication of any "message".

At much the same time as the novels of Rubín and Castellanos a radical new departure was brought to indigenista literature in Mexico with the introduction of first-person Indian narratives. Although the folkloric emphasis, now with a more anthropological approach, was still evident in the later pages of Juan Pérez

Jolote (1948) — a result of Pozas's concern with the informative function — this little book, more or less contemporary with Rubín's El callado dolor de los tzotziles (1949), offered a coherent two-part structure in its presentation of Juan's alienation and reintegration. Its objectivity and brevity of style, the latter even more marked than that of Cajeme (1948), proved more appealing than Rubín's more laboured authorial interventions. Furthermore, while its closing ideological implication with Juan's death may have been Pozas's addition, it is not so overtly expressed as, say, Chuy Taemú's assertion on the penultimate page of La bruma lo vuelve azul (1954): "-Lo más pior que podías 'ber sido, m'hijo: un indio avecinado". On the other hand, however, Rubín with his psychological approach provided a greater personal emphasis on the protagonist than we find on Pozas's Juan. This lack of personal emphasis was remedied in the first-person Indian narratives by Castro's "Che Ndu: ejidatario chinanteco" (1958) and Los hombres verdaderos (1959). Particularly in the latter, the subjective focus provides a valuable insight into the protagonist as an individual and as an Indian.

After the early novels, the cuento provided an alternative form for indigenista writing. As can be seen as early as Rojas González's El diosero (1952), this contributed to the avoidance of the pitfalls of lack of unity, extraneous folklore, and, to a certain extent, the ideological emphasis. Nonetheless, many of the advances brought by the later cuentos (1959-62) were shared by the longer narratives: a greater universality, a more personal focus on the protagonist (often including a degree of interiorization), the use of a child protagonist, the use of a first-person

Indian narrative voice, and various technical innovations besides. In fact, the evolution of the cuento in many ways provides a brief guide to the progress of Mexican literary indigenismo in general after the early exponents of the genre examined in Chapter I.

The principal advances made by Mexican indigenista fiction are on the two often inter-related fronts that we specified as focal points in the Introduction: the indigenista emphasis and the literary art. As regards the indigenista or Indian-oriented content of the novels and cuentos concerned, we witness a progressive diminishing of the outside view and of the non-Indian authorial presence to reach a genuine insight into the indigenous world-view and a convincing presentation of Indian protagonists.

One of the major features contributing to the lessening of the gap between Indian subject and non-Indian author and reader is the introduction of a greater universality. This enables the reader to relate to the indigenous characters on a common level. José Damián in El callado dolor de los tzotziles is faced with the problem of separation from his wife while she, in addition to the separation, is confronted with her apparent sterility, a problem encountered, too, by Juana and Catalina in Castellanos's novels. In Rubín's La bruma lo vuelve azul the two male characters have a strong sense of amour-propre which, once wounded, leads to a desire for revenge. Zepeda's Matías in "Viento" and Daniel in Castellanos's "Aceite guapo" are faced with old age and the approach of death, as are Juan Pérez Jolote and Che Ndu by the end of their respective stories. Imminent death is also the central predicament in Dolujanoff's "La olla de los remedios" and "Dios me prestó sus manos". To name only a few more amongst the variety of universal

topics of the later indigenista literature we might also mention, in Oficio de tinieblas, Pedro's desire for justice, Catalina's need for recognition and gratification, and nana Teresa's rootlessness, Che Ndu's will to carry on working, the theme of hunger in La culebra tapó el río, Benzulul's timidity, and the love of each husband in Dolujanoff's "María Galdina", "El pascola", and "El huellero".

A psychological focus brings us closer to the Indian protagonist. Rubín is the first author to explore this avenue in depth. Although his psychological approach is authorial, thus depriving us of a direct insight into his characters, it marks a certain step forward, nonetheless. Moving on from Rubín, we find greater insight into Juan in Lombardo de Caso's La culebra tapó el río through his inner thoughts, spoken aloud to his dog and to the gods. Castellanos develops further the interiorization process within a third-person narrative. Apart from her brief insight into Juana in Balún-canán, in Oficio de tinieblas we have a variety of narrative modes enabling us to penetrate into the inner being of her Indian characters, especially Catalina.

The most immediate scope for the inside view is, of course, provided by the first-person Indian narrative. Although Juan Pérez Jolote, due to Pozas's primarily informative angle, is remarkably objective, both "Che Ndu" and Los hombres verdaderos, especially the latter, cater for a subjective focus that genuinely brings the Indian protagonist to life. Many of Dolujanoff's stories, too, offer the immediate identification of reader with Indian protagonist produced by the first-person Indian narration as do the first-person Indian narrative voices incorporated into

some of the indigenista stories of Zepeda's Benzulul.

A first-person Indian narrator or an interiorizing psychological approach are often the means by which the later indigenista fiction brings the reader close not only to the individual Indian character but also to the indigenous world-view of that individual. Benzulul's concern with the importance of one's name and chulel is expressed directly by him in first-person meditations and direct speech to Nana Porfiria while in Oficio de tinieblas we gain sufficient insight into Catalina's mental processes to appreciate her offering of Domingo for sacrifice.

The use of a learning process on the part of the protagonist in conjunction with a first-person Indian narrator is the method employed by Juan Pérez Jolote to bring the reader close to facets of the indigenous outlook. This means is exploited to even greater effect in Los hombres verdaderos where there is a greater subjective focus. In the latter, in addition, the protagonist, initially, is a child whose unbiased receptiveness to new ideas we are encouraged, by the first-person narrative and the theme of awareness and learning, to follow.

Although not involving a first-person narrator, it is the Indian child's view that Lombardo de Caso uses to introduce us to Indian belief in La culebra tapó el río, exploiting the likelihood that we will be more willing to accept a different view of reality expressed through a child than coming from an adult. In Peru, J.M. Arguedas, too, realized the potential of the child's view in the case of Ernesto in Los ríos profundos: "Tú ves, como niño, algunas cosas que los mayores no vemos".¹ The first-person narrator, the

1. Edited by William Rowe (Oxford, 1973), p.9.

child protagonist, and the learning process are exploited simultaneously in the first part of Balún-canán and, although the niña is not an Indian, her sympathy with the Indian combined with these devices does lead us to feel for the Indian outlook and position.

The introduction of myth, which we find primarily in Los hombres verdaderos and with Castellanos is another major feature of the later indigenista fiction which enhances our appreciation of the indigenous world-view. In Los hombres verdaderos, legends from Tzeltal oral tradition are incorporated into the novel. While these often contribute through symbolism to the progress of the main body of the novel they also give us direct access to folk belief for they do not even pass through the narrator as subjective filter. With Castellanos, we have not only traditional legends but also the mythicizing tendency, so much a part of the indigenous outlook, is seen in action. We glimpse this briefly in "La tregua" where the ladino has become associated with the pukuj. In Balún-canán the nana's two tales within Part I reveal the indigenous capacity for mitificación for one is a myth which comes to terms with the disappearance of anyone in the Argüello family well disposed towards the Indian while the other incorporates into the Maya myth of the origins of Man a justification of the existence of rich and poor. The snippet of a tale which opens this novel reveals the nana's own capacity for mythicizing as she seems to be creating a tale in preparation for the annihilation of the Indian and his culture by the niña's generation. We see this capacity at work even more clearly in the case of nana Teresa in Oficio de tinieblas, whose final tale offers a justification of the Indians's defeat. Within this novel, too,

in Chapter 18, as the Indians make their way to pay homage to Catalina's gods, we see the actual creation of belief among the populace, a moment that is recalled after Domingo's crucifixion in the expression of the people's belief that none of them will die.

In addition to the mythicizing outlook which comes to greatest prominence in Oficio de tinieblas we also have in this novel an insight into the ahistorical nature of the indigenous temporal outlook. Our appreciation of this is brought about by Castellanos's own adoption of such a perspective in her opening and closing chapters. This, in addition to the mythicizing tendency we see so clearly in Oficio de tinieblas gives the novel an outstanding insight into not only the outlook of certain Indian individuals but also the world-view of a whole people.

Various of the advances we have examined here in relation to the diminishing of the outside view of the Indian bring indigenista fiction into line with the general development of Spanish-American literature in the last few decades and, therefore, are also pertinent to the "literary" advance of indigenista fiction. We might mention in particular in this context its greater universality, its greater psychological depth, and, especially, its inclusion of a mythical presentation of reality, to which we shall shortly return. There are also advances primarily of an artistic nature which, conversely, have their repercussions with regard to the attainment of an inside view of the Indian cosmovisión. Such advances relate to the greater artistic coherence of later exponents of the indigenista genre and concern both the cuento and the later novels, first-person Indian narratives included.

There is no doubt that most of the early indigenista novels studied in Chapter I were "loose baggy monsters" in the extreme. The cuento, because of its brevity and tendency to concentrate on a single moment of crisis, perhaps incorporating a single indigenous belief or custom, provided a concise form by which means to contain an indigenista content which in a longer narrative might have produced too great a diversification. In addition to this artistic contribution, the literary form of the cuento offers a means of coming close to indigenous expression, thus helping to diminish the rift provoked by non-Indian author and Indian content. Unlike the novel, which is exclusively a written literary form of European origins and consequently bears little relevance to the Mexican Indian, the cuento is related to the anecdote, the legend, and the tale of a kind told orally in a non-literate society. Indeed, some two hundred examples of this indigenous form of expression were entered in 1978 for the first Concurso Literario Rosario Castellanos, organized exclusively for Indian entrants.² The very form of the cuento, therefore, being akin to indigenous expression, helps to diminish the gap provoked by the "perspectiva exterior" which Cornejo Polar asserted was the sine qua non of indigenista literature.³ In this connection it is also of note that Zepeda is known in Mexico not only as a cuentista, the author of a book of short stories, but as a story-teller who entertains

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2. The competition was held by the Instituto Nacional Indigenista and the three winning entries were published in México Indígena: Suplemento, 1, no.4 (August 1978), 1-8.
 3. Antonio Cornejo Polar, "La novela indigenista: un género contradictorio", Texto Crítico, 14 (July-September 1979), 58-70 (p.62).

his friends with an oral rendering.

As regards longer narratives, only conceivable as written literature, it would seem that the later exponents of the indigenista genre in Mexico move away from the novela impura, shedding, in particular, the impurities of propaganda and simple folklore that in early years appeared to be to such a great extent the raison d'être of the genre. That is to say, in line with the development of the Spanish-American novel in general there has been in Mexican indigenista fiction a move away from the novel of protest and away from regionalism to a greater concern with el hombre.

From the evidence of Los hombres verdaderos, a Bildungsroman with an Indian protagonist, and Oficio de tinieblas, comparable in some respects to the better European novels of the nineteenth century, it would seem, almost paradoxically, that the move towards a "purer" novel in the culminating exponents of the indigenista novel in Mexico is accompanied not only by a greater universality, as in the Spanish-American novel in general as it leaves regionalism behind, but also by an increase rather than a decrease in the penetration of the indigenous world. From this we may deduce that the ideal balance between "literary" and "indigenista" considerations lies substantially nearer the literary and artistic than any of the early novelists came to perceive. As concerns this primacy of the literary emphasis over indigenista concerns it is of no surprise that both Castro and Castellanos also wrote poetry.

The "impurities" that remain in the culminating indigenista novel -- largely consisting of the myths and mythicizing that are

incorporated into Los hombres verdaderos, Balún-canán, and Oficio de tinieblas -- are significant on two accounts. Firstly, because they constitute indigenous rather than indigenista expression, they provide a similar if not greater lessening of the gap between Indian subject and non-Indian author to that found in the cuento. Secondly, they reveal a point of contact between indigenista literature and the nueva novela in the latter's manifestation of magical realism.

It cannot pass unnoticed that, on the whole, indigenista literature has lagged behind the headway made by the New Novel. The reason, plainly, lies in the former's subject matter and in the indigenista impurities of an informative and ideological nature that this has provoked. Such difficulties were compounded in Mexico by the immense diversity of the ethnic minority groups, the latter made evident in the fifty-six indigenous languages spoken in Mexico today. This provoked a barrier between Indian subject and non-Indian writer and reading public that was probably even greater than in the Andean republics where the indigenous peoples form a high percentage of the population within which linguistic differences are less extensive.

Nevertheless, there does seem to be a watershed in indigenista writing in Mexico at the end of the 1940s, more or less tallying with the publication of Agustín Yañez's Al filo del agua (1947), recognized in Joseph Sommers's After the Storm as the novel which marks a new point of departure in the Mexican novel. In the indigenista genre we find Cajeme (1948), the last of the "early" novels, offering the most possibilities for future progress while the three major lines of development of literatura indigenista

(particularly if we bear in mind that Rojas González's El diosero (1952) was published posthumously) begin precisely at the end of the 1940s. Clearly, there is a new *départure* here which corresponds to the genesis of the modern novel in Mexico though, admittedly, and perhaps predictably, due to the difficulties posed by the subject matter, the new departure takes place at a lower level of artistic achievement than that of Al filo del agua. The full fruits of this triple new departure do not emerge until around 1960, as we have already demonstrated. It is at this later stage that we find the presence of myth which links some indigenista works to elements of magical realism in the modern Spanish-American novel.

As in the case of Arguedas in Peru, the links of this mythical content with magical realism are not so much with the fantastic, inventive magical realism of Borges or Cortázar but, rather, with the more observational magical realism of Carpentier in his perception of the negro world-view in Cuba or Asturias in his presentation of the cosmovisión of the Guatemalan Indian. While we do find a more fantastic, surrealistic use of Mexican indigenous belief in Carlos Fuentes's short story, "Chac Mool" (1954), this is not really descended from indigenista writing which has attempted to put over the world of the present-day Indian. Rather, it springs from a modern author's adoption of magical elements which happen to derive from the ancient indigenous cults of his country though are not necessarily part of the present-day Indians' beliefs.

The use of indigenous myth which we find in Los hombres verdaderos and Oficio de tinieblas puts over the world-image of the Tzeltal and Tzotzil Indians respectively, offering it as an

alternative view of reality. It is this presentation of an alternative view of reality which links the indigenista novel in Mexico to the Spanish-American New Novel. The last folk tale in Los hombres verdaderos in particular asserts the Tzeltal interpretation of reality in opposition to that of the non-Indian for it convinces a disbelieving man who has been amongst the ladinos, and has learned a new cosmovisión from them, that the Tzeltal world-image is valid. In Oficio de tinieblas it is a timeless, mythical presentation of the world which opens the novel's first chapter and which occupies much of the last two chapters. Both the mythicizing tendency of the Indians and their different temporal outlook offer a different view of reality to the standard, rational outlook of Western Man.

The culminating Mexican indigenista novels, then, open our eyes to a different view of reality: the indigenous view. However, while they may assert the validity of that different indigenous outlook, they do not really go so far as to question the validity of our own view of reality. Rather, the two outlooks seem to exist side by side: while the timeless, mythical outlook frames Oficio de tinieblas the main body of the novel is a linear, historical story; in Los hombres verdaderos the protagonist, while keen to adhere to his own world-view, is also willing to accept the different stance of others and is receptive to some of the manifestations of the ladino outlook.

In addition to the presence of myth there is perhaps some contact between the outlook of Mexican indigenista fiction and the fundamental pessimism typical of the nueva novela's vision. However, it is interesting to note that, while we find in Oficio

de tinieblas the presence of myth and an ahistorical, largely cyclical view of time based on the natural cycle, this novel does perhaps cater for the eventual slow, upward spiral perceptible in Carpentier's El siglo de las luces (1962) rather than the downward spiral to destruction of García Márquez's Cien años de soledad (1967). The mythical outlook in Oficio de tinieblas is not necessarily simply a refuge which enables the Indians to absorb their defeat in a timeless siempre. There is the possibility that they might rebuild their strength through cultural solidarity, focusing on the worship of the arca. Furthermore, the continuity of the race is asserted in the penultimate chapter: "es voluntad de los dioses que los tzotziles permanezcan". Finally, the symbolism of the title, evoking the one candle of the Office of Tenebrae which looks forward to the Resurrection, is a piece of Christian symbolism which, in contrast to the inverted Christian symbolism in works like Asturias's El señor presidente, Rulfo's Pedro Páramo, and García Márquez's Cien años de soledad, does seem to offer hope, albeit distant, anticipating the possible resurgence of the Indian. Such potential optimism is confirmed from within the Indian outlook by Los hombres verdaderos, the most optimistic of all the more recent indigenista works.

There are, of course, many new areas of development in the modern Spanish-American novel which indigenista fiction has not really explored. Perhaps the most striking omission, especially in the novel, is indigenismo's lack of humour, though this is perhaps largely true of the early Mexican New Novel too, up to Gustavo Sainz and Fernando del Paso. Within literary indigenismo, only in a few of the cuentos by Rojas González and Dolujanoff do

we find any humorous moments. The lack of humour is no doubt attributable to the fact that literary indigenismo, even in the late 50s and early 60s, is still to a certain extent performing an informative function, documenting the often oppressed condition of the Indian in order to provoke an awareness of this in the reader. Whereas as early as 1938 Rubén Romero was able, in La vida inútil de Pito Pérez, to achieve the kind of detached, ironic vision which can mingle humour with social comment, the indigenistas are on the whole too seriously committed to an exposé of the Indian world and the Indian condition to incorporate humour. Again we come up against the partial limitation on the development of the genre of its indigenista nature.

Moving on from elements of indigenista literature and the modern Spanish-American novel that can be largely regarded as "content", there is the all-important matter of literary technique. Although, admittedly, indigenista literature does seem to lag behind the mainstream development of the novel in Spanish America, due to the "impurities" brought by its indigenista content and a subsequent lack of unity, from 1948 onwards we do perceive a much greater literary coherence, evident initially in the novels of Rubín, Juan Pérez Jolote, and the cuentos of El diosero. By the end of the 50s the greater technical sophistication includes a certain amount of experimentation too. In the cuento there is the use of recurrent key phrases and some stream of consciousness with Dolujanoff while we find the innovation of two narrative voices with Zepeda. In the novel, Castro offers a unified narrative in Los hombres verdaderos which experiments with the inclusion of traditional tales. With Castellanos's Oficio de tinieblas we

welcome not only the ability to construct a coherent, artistic whole but also her use of interiorizing modes of discourse, fruitful in the inner portrayal of her fictional characters, especially amongst the Indians. Balún-canán marks a departure from the traditional narrative mould in its use of a first-person child narrator for the first and third parts while the central part is a third-person adult narration. Also the use of the "serie de estampas, aisladas en apariencia pero que funcionan en conjunto"⁴ is indication of Castellanos's willingness to depart from the old-style realist narrative. Oficio de tinieblas, however, revokes such an approach, being, in Castellanos's opinion, complicated and confusing enough as a story already without the addition of stylistic or structural difficulties.⁵

It is in such an outlook on the part of the author that we see the indigenista novel falling short of the New Novel's often complex and confusing narrative techniques. Oficio de tinieblas, regarded by so many critics as the culmination of the indigenista genre in Mexico, significantly, does not take the step beyond the kind of technical sophistication that can produce an ordered and coherent reality in the novel: it does not offer a technique like that of Juan Rulfo's Pedro Páramo whose form embodies the very confusing nature of the reality it depicts. As we have already suggested, while Rosario Castellanos may offer us the indigenous outlook as an alternative view of reality, this does not involve

4. Emmanuel Carballo, "Rosario Castellanos: la historia de sus libros contada por ella misma", La Cultura en México, 19 December 1962, p.4.

5. Carballo, "Rosario Castellanos", p.5.

a questioning of her own view of reality. Rather, Oficio de tinieblas takes the confusing and complex story of this novel and orders it into a more coherent form, typical of a more traditional novelistic concept of reality.

In conclusion, then, the evolution of indigenista fiction in Mexico moves away from realism, regionalism, and the novel of protest as does the Spanish-American novel in general but in the case of indigenismo the process is slower and not so far-reaching. While indigenista fiction takes tentative steps in the direction of the nueva novela -- noticeable to a limited extent in technical experimentation and more significantly in its presentation of a mythical view of reality -- it does not fully merge with the nueva novela but still bears clear traces of a more traditional approach. This half-way stage is perhaps to be expected for, in broad terms, indigenista fiction in Mexico, dating from 1935 to 1962, spans the transitional period in Spanish-American fiction from old-style realism to the New Novel.

As for the future of the indigenista genre, it is of note that since Oficio de tinieblas there have been no further significant indigenista publications. While we might suggest that Castellanos's tragic and untimely death in 1974, like the suicide of Arguedas in Peru in 1966, has been influential in truncating the genre, it is also clear that the decrease in indigenista "impurities" of the later exponents tends to remove the hall-mark of indigenista writing. Literature published now with a certain Indian-oriented concern may not be so easily classified as indigenista. In addition, despite the impetus for a resurgence of an indigenista movement due to the increased repression of the Indian in Mexico

in recent years, the fact that the Indians themselves in the last decade (as we mentioned in the Introduction, page 4) have begun to stand up against the disintegration of their culture, their communities, and their identity, means that part of the motive for indigenista writing has now been displaced.

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